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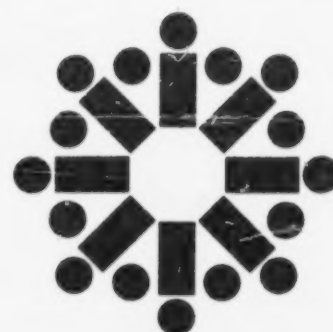
ABSTRACT

A study was conducted of a group of New York City parents whose children were having problems in normal adjustment to school to implement improved parent school interaction. The study consists of three chapters: (1) Description of Project, (2) Findings, and (3) Recommendations. The objectives of the study are: (1) determine parents' awareness of their children's enrollment and knowledge of the program, (2) determine how parents receive program information, (3) learn parents' observation of change of child's behavior at school and home, (4) learn if programs establish closer relationship between parents and schools, and (5) learn what changes parents would suggest. The report also contains three appendices: (1) instruments, (2) new structure for parent-school relationships (an outline for a parent's handbook which might be used to improve parent-school relationships) and (3) participants involved.
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**OPINIONS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS
OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN SPECIAL CLASSES
FOR THE SOCIALLY MALADJUSTED
AND EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED
IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

by Thelma M. Williams



October 1969

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The Center for Urban Education
105 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016

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Thelma Murdaugh Williams

FOREWORD

Teachers, supervisors, principals, and other professional educational personnel have consistently stated that effective education requires the participation of parents in the educational process. Many procedures have been devised to improve the communication between home and school in order to have parents understand the school program and their participator's role.

This study of one special group of New York City parents, parents of children who were having problems in normal adjustment to school, indicates that there is a disparity between the official systemwide school policy in New York City for parent involvement and the implementation of this policy on the local school level. Board of Education school regulations state that parent conferences should be held before children are placed in special adjustment classes. However, the information from the interview data in this study reveals that in six out of ten placements of the sample population, no hearings or conferences were held prior to the child's transfer to the special class. The data also show that, on the average, eight out of ten parents had visited the schools at least once to discuss the work and progress of their children. It is clear that the parents were interested in the progress of their children and were willing to visit the schools.

One of the limitations of this study is that there were no interviews or discussions with the professional personnel of the schools involved in the study to determine why school personnel made placements of children without the prior conference with the parents. The essential

problem is that children who already had exhibited difficulty in adjusting to school require even greater than normal cooperation between the school and the home. Despite the additional professional resources for these special classes and schools, this cooperation evidently did not occur.

The need for the implementation of improved parent-school interaction remains critical. This study has moved beyond the platitudinous statement of need; it offers the specifics of a program to develop realistic home-school cooperation for effective education.

Stanley Lisser
Assistant Director,
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CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

A. Introduction

The New York City Board of Education provides special education to pupils who are considered "socially maladjusted or emotionally disturbed," because they are unable to maintain themselves in and profit from instruction in a regular classroom.¹ During the 1966-67 school year the New York City Board of Education expanded and intensified services in these special educational programs with funds allocated by the federal government under provisions of Title I of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This survey is the first parent survey to be sponsored by the Center for Urban Education and the Board of Education of New York City cooperatively.

Four of these special education programs are: Schools for the Socially Maladjusted and Emotionally Disturbed, previously known as "600" schools (hereafter referred to as SMED), Junior Guidance, Career Guidance, and Special Guidance. These programs are located in 60 schools in Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan and Queens,² serving approximately 15,000 pupils.

This study presents the findings of a survey of certain opinions and attitudes of parents whose children were enrolled in one of these special education programs, of which all received Title I funds for the

¹New York City Board of Education Summary Form for Supportive Services for Socially Maladjusted Children, Title I, ESEA, November 1968.

²Schools in Richmond were not included in these New York City Board of Education Special Projects.

1966-67 school year. The SMED program is conducted at specially organized schools, while the others are conducted at regular schools in special classes and units. All utilize modified curricula, provide special health and psychological services, and employ specially trained professional staff members. As A. L. Gallop has observed: "Recent laws, such as E.S.E.A., have added a new responsibility to the U.S. Office -- that of spurring educational change and reform, especially for the impoverished and the handicapped."³

These programs were designed to cope with and serve "problem children." This population includes children who are emotionally disturbed, disruptive, withdrawn, socially maladjusted, hostile, chronically truant, have learning disabilities, are underachievers or are identified as potential dropouts. Some of these programs have become the object of public controversy -- particularly the program of SMED schools, which are better known by their former name as "600" schools.

B. Description of the Programs⁴

1. The Junior Guidance Program

The Junior Guidance Program was designed to provide a therapeutic climate in a public school setting which afforded opportunity for instruction, in "low register" classroom situations, to emotionally disturbed

³Gallop, A. L., "N.E.A. Power on the Hill," Journal of the National Education Association, Vol. 57, No. 3, March 1968, p. 36.

⁴For detailed descriptions of these programs see the following reports by Thelma M. Williams: Supportive Services for Socially Maladjusted Children in Regular Schools and Implementation of the Career Guidance Curriculum and Teacher Training; New York: Center for Urban Education, 1967.

children who, for various reasons, could not adjust in regular school settings.

The children selected for Junior Guidance classes have personality and character problems as well as deep-rooted learning disabilities. Special methods used in working with these pupils include screening through psychological testing, use of a full-team approach including psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors and psychiatrists, and assignment of specially trained teachers.

Children identified as too maladjusted to function in a regular class setting are transferred to a Junior Guidance class either at their own school or a near one where such classes are available. The Board of Education guidelines provide that an interview with the parent should be part of the screening procedure. To quote the Board of Education document: "The therapeutic quality of the program depends upon the development of each of the following segments: (1) (2) group work with the parents of these pupils. Disturbed children are frequently symptomatic of disturbed homes."⁵

The Junior Guidance Program was amplified through Title I funds in 1966-67 by the following positions:

Guidance Counselors	6	Psychologist	1
Social Workers	3	Psychiatrist	1

2. Schools for the Socially Maladjusted and Emotionally Disturbed (SMED)

This program was initiated by the New York City Board of Education in May of 1946. At that time the schools were known as "600" schools.

⁵The Junior Guidance Classes Program, Board of Education of the City of New York, Division of Elementary Schools, March 22, 1961.

Since then the program has been extensively expanded and revised. On February 17, 1966, these schools were officially designated Schools for the Socially Maladjusted and Emotionally Disturbed. According to a Board of Education report:

"The '600' Schools are designed to educate emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted children who are recommended for special programs because they are unable to profit from instruction in a normal school setting, where they make it extremely difficult for other children to receive uninterrupted instruction and where they present a hazard to their own safety and welfare as well as to other pupils.... Students in the SMED schools... are of the acting-out type whose primary behavior disorder manifests itself in repeated disruptive and aggressive behavior, extensive in scope and serious in nature."⁶

In a special circular (No. 8 published in September 27, 1961), "Screening Procedures for '600' Schools," issued by the Board of Education, one of the items specifies "the principal and guidance counselor should interview the applicant for admission together with his parent." The screening and admitting procedures for this program are elaborate and are spelled out in great detail. The Board report said of this process:

"It is important to note that the screening for '600' School placement is done only after all other attempts at adjustment in regular schools have failed. It is designed to be the cumulation of a process of consultation and study in which assistant superintendent, principal, parents, guidance personnel and social workers, clinical and teaching personnel are involved."

During the 1966-67 school year the SMED program was augmented through Title I funds for the following positions:

⁶"600" School - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Committee on the "600" Schools, a report to the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education of the City of New York, February 1965, pp. 10-11.

Assistant Principals	30
Teachers	80
School Secretaries	15

Guidance Counselors	15
School Aides	15

After School Study Centers

Teacher-in-Charge	4
Teachers	16

Secretaries	4
-------------	---

Health and Attendance Services

School Social Workers	2
Psychologists	2

Psychiatrists	2
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3. The Special Guidance Program

Special Guidance classes were formerly designated as Citizenship Classes. They are established on a district-wide basis for the temporary placement of pupils awaiting the final decision of suspension proceedings or administrative hearings. In many cases these proceedings may result in transfer to a school for socially maladjusted and emotionally disturbed children. These Special Guidance Classes also may include children within a school who, in the judgment of the principal, require temporary removal from the regular classroom because of emotional or behavior problems. The children selected may be of normal or even above average intelligence but are often severely retarded academically.

In the case of this program the Board of Education has not issued any specific guidelines or criteria for screening and admission of pupils. Pupils are admitted upon the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the principal and guidance counselor. The final disposition of each case is made by the school principal or, in some instances, by the assistant superintendent of the school district. When a pupil is assigned to the program, the parent is invited by the school principal or the district superintendent to discuss the nature of the child's problem. After

assignment of a child to a Special Guidance class, the guidance counselor works, on a supportive basis, with both parent and child. The child remains in the Special Guidance class until a final decision of his case is made, at which point he may go back to a regular class in the same school, or he may be assigned to one of the special schools. There is no specific regulation as to the time a child may spend in a Special Guidance class, and this period seems to vary from a few weeks to as long as a full school term.

According to the project proposals the Board of Education budgeted Title I funds to provide extra personnel for 15 Special Guidance classes in five junior high schools and ten elementary schools. The positions allocated were:

Guidance Counselors	12	Psychiatrist (part time)	1
Social Worker	1		

4. Career Guidance

The Career Guidance Project was initiated in 1957-58 by the Junior High School Division to establish an educational program for those pupils whose academic, social, and emotional adjustment to the junior high school was extremely poor and who showed every indication of becoming dropouts. The pupils are selected for this program depending on how they place on a 15 point weighted scale devised to identify early dropouts. The scale includes such items of information as pupil's school achievement, behavior, family patterns, socio-economic status, educational level of parents, and school mobility.

Regarding admitting procedures, the Board of Education guidelines contains the statement, "Once the final selection of pupils is made, the parents should be informed and oriented to the program. Parent co-operation can be of invaluable aid to satisfactory school adjustment

for the pupils."⁷ Another stipulation in the guidelines which bears noting is that "pupils are to remain in a Career Guidance class for just one year, i.e., they may not be 'left back'." This means that pupils can be in this program for only one year -- because it is specifically limited to 14-year-old eighth graders and 15-year-old ninth graders.

In each school the Career Guidance Program is organized in a unit of three classes, each having a maximum register of 15. Five teachers are assigned to each unit: three teachers for academic work, a full-time advisor, who is to meet with each child individually at least once a week, and a full time industrial arts teacher. These teachers teach only Career Guidance pupils.

Career Guidance was also augmented with Title I funds during 1966-67. The following positions were allocated:

Guidance Counselors	5
Social Worker	1
Psychiatrist	1

C. Assumptions of the Study

Education in America is viewed as a complementary process between the home and school environments. The climate of the classroom, the attitude of the teacher, the involvement of parents, are all known to be factors in the shaping of a pupil's aspiration level and his self-expectancy. Craft, Raynor and Cohen⁸ states, "academic achievements

⁷Guidelines for the Career Guidance Program, Board of Education of the City of New York, September 1965.

⁸Craft, Maurice, John Raynor, Louis Cohen. Linking Home and School. Longmans, Green and Company Ltd., London, 1967, p. 72.

will itself improve only when teacher and parent work in close harmony with each other towards the attainment of commonly understood and agreeable objectives." Acceptance and respect for parent opinions should act as a stimulant for more positive support, interest and involvement in their child's schooling and education.

Given the stated goals of the programs, one performance criterion, or social outcome criterion, in the evaluation of their success or failure would be the degree of knowledge of and involvement in these programs by the parents of the children enrolled in them. It is reasonable to expect that parents of a child in a special education program would have considerable information about the child's performance or lack of performance simply because he is theoretically the beneficiary of special and enriched help. It is further assumed that this should be true because parental involvement and cooperation is even more drastically needed in situations where the pupil has a social and/or emotional handicap than in normal school situations.

Many parents were not interviewed. It seems reasonable to assume that the children of the parents not interviewed were worse off academically than the children of parents interviewed. It is also possible that a lesser impact would have been made by the school on parents who could not be located than upon those who provided this data. The assumption is also based on whether the parent has been told why additional personnel and services have been added to the school program. Because of the child's placement in a special education program where funds have been allocated for additional human and physical resources, what expectations for improved academic achievement and behavior did the parent seem to express?

And finally, did the parent participate with teachers or other school personnel in a joint evaluation of his child's progress?

A second assumption is that from such a circular process there should develop between teacher, school and parent improved communication and a mutual understanding of the learner's needs, of the specific kind of deficiencies and strengths he brings to the classroom, and the dissonances that may occur between the expectation of the home, the pupil's self expectations and the school tasks.

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

1. To ascertain if parents were aware that their children were enrolled in special educational programs and to determine the extent of their knowledge of these programs.
2. To determine how parents got information about the programs their child attended and what, if any, contacts with and involvement in the schools and the program they had.
3. To learn if parents observed any changes in the child's behavior at school and at home and how they felt about their child's achievement and conduct at school.
4. To learn if these special educational programs established a closer relationship between the parents and the school their child attended.
5. To learn what improvements or changes, if any, parents would suggest in their child's educational program.

E. Study Design

1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to elicit parent opinions, attitudes and involvement. (The questionnaire was based in part on a previously constructed instrument used by the author in the report listed in footnote 4.) The questionnaire was pretested, preliminary data being collected from ten parents and two parent consultants. A revised questionnaire, based on results from the preliminary study, comprised seven "warm-up" items intended to place the parent at ease and to establish rapport with the interviewer, and 11 items requiring a "yes" or "no" response. Opportunity was provided for parents to expand on any of their answers (see Appendix A).

Parents were informed that their cooperation was entirely voluntary, that they could terminate the interview if they so decided, and that their replies would be kept in strict confidence.

After the interviews were completed, 24 parents were reached by telephone to determine if they had actually been interviewed. They were also asked a series of questions and their responses were compared with their previous answers. The telephone check revealed a high degree of consistency in responses.

2. The Interviewers

Previous studies have revealed that the overwhelming majority of children in these programs were black or Puerto Rican. To provide more reliable and valid information it is generally agreed that interviewing should be done by community personnel, i.e., local persons who know and

understand their own neighborhoods and would be accepted by the parents interviewed. Further, there was an awareness that only mature adults should be employed to elicit the opinions and concerns of the parents. The offices of the following ten organizations were solicited for potential interviewers from the same communities as the parents to be interviewed: ASPIRA in East Harlem; HARYOU ACT, Manhattan; Janes Methodist Church, Brooklyn; MEND (Massive Economic Neighborhood Development in Harlem; Mt. Ararat Baptist Church, Brooklyn; NAACP National Headquarters, Manhattan; National Teacher Corp., Flushing, Queens; New York City Department of Welfare, New York City; Warren Street Community Center in Brooklyn; and Youth-in-Action in Brooklyn.

Of the persons referred from these organizations, 28 were retained. All interviewers were assigned to neighborhoods in which they lived. Spanish-speaking interviewers were assigned to parents whose names suggested Spanish origin.

Training sessions were organized on group and individual bases for the interviewers, and information given and discussions held on: the purpose and work of the Center for Urban Education; the need and aims of the parent opinion survey; the use of questionnaire and techniques of interviewing; compensation and record keeping; and the target date for completing all interviews.

The group training sessions and individual conferences were conducted over a ten-day period. Staff consultants sought to develop involvement of the interviewers in the purposes of the study and stressed the importance of the total personnel in the collection of the data. The

basic philosophy and significance of the survey were discussed and prospective interviewers were encouraged to participate in role-playing, rehearse mock interviews and ask questions. Interviewers were informed that spot-checking of interviews would be made to validate the data obtained. Time length for interviews was set at approximately a half-hour. At the conclusion of the training period, kits for interviewers were supplied and parent lists were distributed. Copies in Spanish were included where needed. All kits contained the following:

1. Twenty parent names
2. Questionnaire blanks in English and/or Spanish
3. Instructions to interviewers
4. Introduction letters in Spanish and English to the parent
5. Two time sheets

3. Sample Selection Procedures

Permission was obtained from the Bureau of Educational Research of the New York City Board of Education to use the parent lists for those schools where the Special Education Programs were in operation. The choices of specific schools to be included in the study were made by the investigators; and it was their decision to use only schools in which pupil evaluation was on going under Title I provisions. (See Table 1.) Some Board of Education personnel wanted the parent interviews to be conducted in the schools. However, after it was pointed out that visits to the homes should produce a more representative sample, be more productive and be less threatening to parents, agreement was reached for the latter course of action.

Thirty-six schools in which the four types of programs were operative were contacted to obtain lists of parents names. Thirty of the 36

schools provided lists totaling 2,168 parents names. After the lists were received, and the sampling procedure determined (Table 2), interviewers were assigned parents names whose addresses were closest to the interviewer's neighborhood. Those parents whose last names suggested Hispanic origin were given to interviewers who spoke Spanish.

The original intentions of the investigators was to interview approximately 100 parents with a child in the SMED program, 100 with a child in Career Guidance, 100 with a child in Special Guidance, and 100 with a child in Junior Guidance. To achieve this goal it was estimated that at least 200 names of parents from each program would have to be made available (this to allow for people not being at home when interviewer called on them, for people having moved, and for any other difficulties). The reason for this type of selection was also based on such information of the community as Kvaraceus⁹ notes, "...and he knows he will soon be moving, that his child will be in another school -- no better and perhaps worse than this -- so why bother." Glueck¹⁰ states, "As we would expect, we found that the delinquents had far less opportunity than the non-delinquents to develop close neighborhood ties, for only 21.3 percent had moved less than five times from one house to another, as compared with 58.5 percent of the non-delinquents; while at the other extreme, 23.9 percent had moved 14 or more times, as compared with 5.2 percent of the non-delinquents."

⁹Kvaraceus, William C., and others, Negro Self-Concept: Implications for School and Citizenship, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1965, p. 121.

¹⁰Glueck, Sheldon and Eleanor, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, published for the Commonwealth Fund by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950, p. 155.

The parent lists provided the investigators did not permit for this design. Of the 2,168 names received, the great majority -- 1,740 -- were of parents with children in the SMED program. Schools with Career Guidance programs submitted 223 names, those with Special Guidance provided 177 names and those with Junior Guidance programs only 28 names. Consequently, sampling was conducted within the limitations imposed by these conditions. Of the 1,740 names representing SMED, every eight was randomly selected (216); of the 223 names representing Career Guidance, 203 were used, as were the 28 Junior Guidance and 177 Special Guidance names. Thus the available sample comprised a total of 624 names. Out of this total the interviewers reached 293 parents. Twenty-three of these interviews were incomplete and were not included in the tabulations. Consequently, this study is based on 270 completed interviews. Since the original survey goal was a sample of 400, this figure of 270 represents a 67.6 percent fulfillment rate. However, the distribution between Junior Guidance and the other programs is uneven -- SMED is represented by 83 parents, Special Guidance by 89, Career Guidance by 81, but Junior Guidance by only 17.

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

A. Description of Parents

The ethnic background of the 270 respondents was as follows: black, 130 (49 percent); Puerto Rican, 128 (47 percent); white 12 (four percent).

TABLE 1

SELECTION OF PARENTS NAMES FOR INCLUSION IN SAMPLE

	Total	Junior Guidance (1)	SMED (2)	Special Guidance (3)	Career Guidance (4)
Number of schools in Board of Education programs	60	18	16	16	10
Number of schools from which parent lists were requested	36	4	16	11	5
Number of schools that sub- mitted parent lists	30	2	14	9	5
Number of parent names sub- mitted by schools	2,168	28	1,740	177	223
Number of parent names in- cluded in survey	624	28	216*	177	203**

15

(1) Elementary schools for boys and girls.

(2) Elementary and junior high, 12 schools for boys; junior high and high school, one for girls; high schools, three for boys.

(3) Elementary schools 11; junior high, five. There was no information concerning pupil's sex for Special Guidance Programs.

(4) Junior high schools for boys.

*Every eighth name randomly selected.

**Every tenth name dropped from school lists.

TABLE 2

COMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE PARENT INTERVIEWS
(Number and Percentage Distributions)

	Junior Guidance N 28 % 100	SMED N 216 % 100	Special Guidance N 177 % 100	Career Guidance N 203 % 100	Total N 624 % 100
Interviews Completed	17 61	83 38	89 50	81 40	270 43
Interviews Not Completed	11 39	133 62	88 50	122 60	354 57
<u>Not Completed</u>					16
a) Not at home	1 4	60 29	26 15	55 27	142 23
b) No such address, incorrect address	1 4	20 9	15 8	16 8	52 8
c) Moved	6 21	7 3	10 6	19 9	42 7
d) Homes not visited	0 0	20 9	18 10	16 8	54 8
e) Unable to speak English*	0 0	13 6	14 8	14 7	41 7
f) Interview data incomplete	3 10	13 6	5 3	2 1	23 4

*Interviews were not rescheduled because of insufficient time.

The parents' reaction to the survey warrants mention. The interviewers reported almost unanimously on the parents cooperation and willingness to provide the sought-for information. Parents were interested in the survey, and showed willingness and eagerness to discuss their children's education. They welcomed the interest taken in their opinions and the opportunity to express their concerns.

Table 3 reveals that 75 percent of the interviews were conducted with the child's mother, 7 percent with the father and 6 percent with both parents present. In all but 12 percent of the cases, interviews were conducted with the child's parents; the 12 percent represent interviews with older siblings, foster parents or grandparents responsible for the child.

TABLE 3
RELATIONSHIP OF RESPONDENTS TO PUPIL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

Persons Interviewed	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mother	202	75	9	53	67	81	68	76	58	72
Father	20	7	2	12	3	3	9	10	6	7
Both parents	17	6	6	35	3	3	3	4	5	6
Other - sibling, foster parent, grandparent	31	12	0	0	10	13	9	10	12	15
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Table 4 indicates that the majority of the parents interviewed (79 percent) in all four programs have resided in New York City six years or longer, and 6 percent have lived in New York City for five years or less.

TABLE 4

LENGTH OF TIME RESPONDENTS HAVE LIVED IN NEW YORK CITY
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5 years or less	15	6	1	6	3	4	9	10	2	3
6 years or more	213	79	10	59	65	78	64	72	74	91
Since birth	42	16	6	35	15	18	16	18	5	6
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

As Table 5 illustrates, 81 percent of the students were born in New York City. Seven percent were born in the southern part of the United States and Puerto Rico respectively. These figures suggest that there should not have been any unusual school adjustment problems, because most of the pupils began their education in the New York City public school system.

The data indicate that the Career Guidance program might contain a slightly smaller proportion of New York City-born pupils than the other programs. It is probable that some of the pupils in the Career Guidance program began their formal education before entering the New York City public school system and could have needed an adjustment period.

TABLE 5
PLACE OF PUPILS' BIRTH
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
New York	219	81	16	94	72	87	71	80	60	75
South	19	7	0	0	5	6	6	7	8	10
Puerto Rico	19	7	0	0	1	1	9	10	9	11
Other	5	2	1	6	0	0	2	2	2	2
Do not know	8	3	0	0	5	6	1	1	2	2
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

B. Parents Awareness of Changes in Their Children's School Situation

1. Overall Awareness of Differences

One of the questions asked of the parents was "Is there anything different about (pupil's name) class or school this year as compared to last year?" There were two major reasons for eliciting this response. First, it was assumed that a large proportion of these parents' children had been transferred into the special program in which he was then enrolled within the past year or so (three of the programs are of a fairly transient character; only Junior Guidance seems to have a stable enrollment). Thus the parent might be expected to be aware of differences in the child's class or school situation. Secondly, since these programs had all been augmented by Title I funds that year (1966-67), it could be expected that the parents would be cognizant of some changes or improvements in the educational services provided their children.

The findings suggest that awareness of any such difference was not very great. Only 49 percent of parents of children enrolled in these programs were aware of any differences in their child's school or class situation -- and at that 13 percent actually reported changes for the worse. (See Table 6.)

The group most aware of positive changes in their child's school situation were parents of Junior Guidance pupils. Although the sample is small, the evidence that these parents were more involved and knew more about their child's schooling is consistent throughout the study. Parents of children in Special Guidance and in Career Guidance programs were least cognizant of any differences between their children's former and current school situations. Between 45 and 50 percent noted no change.

Among parents of children in SMED schools, 58 percent knew that there was something different about their child's school "this" year, but 16 percent of this group felt that the difference was negative. Among parents of Special and Career Guidance pupils, 12 and 14 percent respectively also believed their child's school situation has changed for the worse. Only parents with children in the Junior Guidance program reported no negative changes in their children's school situation.

TABLE 6

PARENTS' AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCES IN PUPILS' SCHOOL
OR CLASS SITUATION THIS YEAR
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Aware of any difference: (Net)	<u>133</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>47</u>
For the better	98	36	13	77	35	42	23	26	27	33
For the worse	35	13	0	0	13	16	11	12	11	14
Not aware of any difference	105	39	3	17	22	27	40	45	40	50
Unclear, do not know	32	12	1	6	13	15	16	18	3	3
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

That many parents -- particularly of SMED and Special Guidance children -- are uninformed about their child's school situation is further revealed by comparing their responses to two different questions. More than four-fifths (82 percent) of all SMED children's parents reported that their child had been "transferred" (i.e., was in a different school) last year; less than three-fifths (58 percent) say there is "anything different" about the child's school or class this year. The contrast is more dramatic when one notes that 82 percent say their child was transferred and only 42 percent say his school or class has changed for the better. A similar pattern obtains among parents with children in Special Guidance. (See Table 6a.)

TABLE 6a

COMPARISON OF PARENTS AWARENESS OF CHILD'S TRANSFER AND
DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOL SITUATION

	Total %	Junior Guidance %	SMED %	Special Guidance %	Career Guidance %
Child was transferred during 1966-67	55	88	82	46	30
Parent aware of differences in class or school	<u>49</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>Difference:</u>					
For better	36	77	42	26	33
For worse	13	0	16	12	14

The kinds of positive differences noted by the parents (see Table 7) were that their child now liked his school better (15 percent) and was making better progress (34 percent); that classes were smaller (26 percent) or special (11 percent); and that teachers now were black (7 percent) or were better (7 percent).

Some of the more typical comments were:

"Child improved after he was placed in a special class of only 14 pupils."

"He would never read, now he reads, and enjoys doing his homework. There has been an improvement in every subject."

"Marks went up from 45 to 60 and from 80 to 90."

"Child improved since Mr. _____, a Negro, became his teacher."

"Child improved because of school. He has become more out-going and friendly, steady gradual improvement -- he plays well with children. Before, he would stand

in the background. He writes better, better studying habits, but not consistent, he wants to run, and get it done."

"_____ doesn't like the work, but in this school he is doing better just to get out."

"He is more obedient, does more reading."

TABLE 7

KINDS OF POSITIVE DIFFERENCES NOTED IN PUPILS'
SCHOOL OR CLASS SITUATION

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Negro teachers	7	7	0	0	7	20	0	0	0	0
Better teachers	7	7	1	8	0	0	3	13	3	11
Special classes	11	11	6	46	0	0	3	13	2	7
Smaller classes	25	26	4	31	3	9	7	30	11	41
Likes school this year	15	15	0	0	15	43	0	0	0	0
Making better progress	33	34	2	15	10	29	10	44	11	41
Total	98	100	13	100	35	100	23	100	27	100

While the large majority of parents of children enrolled in Junior Guidance named smaller classes, the bulk of parents of SMED school pupils referred to the child's greater liking for school and his better progress.

Among parents of SMED school pupils few cited academic progress; Most of the positive comment focused on better social adjustment. The impression gained in some interviews was that parents construed fewer

complaints from the school as indicating "better progress." The following comments illustrate this point:

"There's been no complaints this year -- he's getting along better."

"Conduct fair, no bad reports from school, mainly because he doesn't go."

"Last year he fought and didn't get along with the other children. Now I get no complaints."

"My boy seems to be adjusting better in the new school. Anyhow, he's less trouble."

"I think his behavior is better. He likes it better this year."

"Loves his school very much now."

The 35 parents who reported that their child's school situation had deteriorated since the previous year referred most often to greater adjustment problems and greater truancy (72 percent); to poor discipline and less homework (17 percent); and to an impermanent teaching staff (11 percent). (See Table 8.)

Parents of Career Guidance students reported truancy and adjustment problems more often (91 percent) than the other groups, while the complaint that discipline and homework assignments have deteriorated was voiced most often by parents of Special Guidance students. Some parents also noted that assignment to a school or class for "bad" children had affected their child's performance adversely.

"My son has one thing in mind, that this school is for bad boys. So he is very displeased about being a part of the other boys."

"He is embarrassed about going to this school. Some of the children around here tease him and call him 'convict'."

"He hates school, doesn't like the boys there, and don't get along with them."

"If a person don't like something, nothing will help."

"This school is really for children that are 'bad' and not 'slow' ones."

TABLE 8

KINDS OF NEGATIVE DIFFERENCES NOTED IN PUPILS'
SCHOOL OR CLASS SITUATION

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
More truancy	15	43	0	0	5	38	4	36	6	55
Greater adjustment problems	10	29	0	0	4	31	2	19	4	36
Less discipline	4	11	0	0	0	0	4	36	0	0
No homework	2	6	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	9
Too many substitute teachers/ child does not like teacher	4	11	0	0	3	23	1	9	0	0
Total	35	100	0	0	13	100	11	100	11	100

2. Use of "Special School Services"

The four special education projects were augmented during the 1966-67 school year by additional services and personnel in the form of guidance counselors, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, librarian-teachers, reading specialists and additional assistant principals.

It would appear that only a small percentage of children enrolled in these programs participated in the special services provided (see Table 9), judging by the percentage of parents cognizant of the fact of their participation. In all, only 38 percent of the parents reported that their child used "any special school services," while the rest believed no such services were used. Parents of children in SMED schools were somewhat more aware of their children's use of special services (47 percent) than other parents.

TABLE 9

PARENT'S AWARENESS OF PUPILS' USE OF SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICES
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, child is using special services	102	38	6	35	39	47	30	34	27	33
No, child is not using any special services	168	62	11	65	44	53	59	66	54	67
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Among the special services used, help in academic subjects and in reading were mentioned most often (31 percent) with lunch and/or breakfast and recreational and cultural enrichment programs second in frequency at 23 percent each. (See Table 10.)

TABLE 10

PARENTS' AWARENESS OF KINDS OF SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICES USED BY PUPIL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Instructional:</u>										
Reading classes & after school tutoring (help with skill subjects)	36	31	1	25	15	38	12	40	8	30
<u>Recreation, cultural:</u>										
Music, arts and crafts	27	23	1	25	13	33	6	20	7	25
<u>Supportive:</u>										
Lunch and/or breakfast	27	23	1	25	10	26	12	40	4	15
Transportation	11	9	0	0	10	26	1	3	0	0
Other responses	10	8	0	0	3	8	3	10	4	15
Do not know	7	6	1	25	0	0	2	7	4	15
Total	118	100	4	100	51	100	36	100	27	100

C. Parents Awareness of Transfer to Special Education Program

The norm for New York City schools is for a child to be attending a "normal" program in a "normal" school. However, for a wide variety of reasons and to meet a host of varying needs, "special" programs and/or "special" schools are provided by the school system for some of the pupils. Unless a child has a medical history or physical handicap indicating special treatment, all children are enrolled in "normal" schools and classes when they enter the school system. A child

may be reassigned to another "special" program (whether within his own school or at another school) at some point thereafter, if the school authorities feel that he cannot benefit from regular instruction, if they deem he needs a special program to meet his special needs, if he is uncontrollable and disruptive to "regular" education, etc.

It is generally assumed that the parents are consulted when a child is transferred into another program -- it is certainly the assumed tenet of good educational practice that a parent be at least notified. In the case of transfers to SMED schools (also called "600" schools) the enabling procedure under which these schools operate specifies that a conference must be held at which the parents must be present.

The lists of names from which the sample was drawn did not indicate when the child (of the parent named) had transferred into the "special" program in which he was presently enrolled, consequently the investigators were unable to determine the actual number of children who were transferred during the 1966-67 school year from those transferred previously.

The majority (55 percent) of the parents reported that their child was "transferred" during the 1966-67 school year (Table 6). Twenty-one percent reported there was no transfer during that year, and the remainder (24 percent) were unclear or did not answer the question. It should be understood when reading Table 11 that data from respondents were placed in the "no transfer" category depending upon their own definitions -- even if in other questions asked, the information received from the respondent indicated that the child had been transferred; if the parent

clearly stated there had been no transfer, he was so coded. The analysis of these responses offers additional evidence that there was a good deal of confusion among parents concerning the educational programs their children were enrolled in.

Awareness that their child was transferred was highest among parents of SMED School students -- understandable since a "transfer" to SMED meant literally reassignment to a different school.

The Career Guidance and Special Guidance groups were least clear on the question of their child's transfer -- over one-third of these parents were not able to answer this question. This indicates that a considerable number of parents was not informed about when and why their child was transferred into these programs.

TABLE 11

PARENTS' REPORT OF PUPILS TRANSFERRED DURING 1966-1967 SCHOOL YEAR
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes - Pupils transferred during 1966-67	148	55	15	88	68	82	41	46	24	30
No - Pupils not transferred during 1966-67	57	21	2	12	11	13	17	19	27	33
Do not know	65	24	0	0	4	5	31	35	30	37
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

The parents' misconceptions and lack of information about these four special education programs is further revealed by their explanations of why the child was transferred. Over a third of all the parents sampled had an erroneous impression of the reason for the child's placement in the program -- and the extent of misunderstanding was even greater within some of the groups individually. For instance (as shown on Table 12), 37 percent of Special Guidance parents thought that the child was transferred because the previous school had no further grades. It can only be assumed, since this information is not available to us, that the child was enrolled in Special Guidance in the former school, otherwise the parent should be cognizant of the fact that the child was transferred from program to program, rather than just from one school to another. The same reasons applied to the response that the child was "transferred" because the "family moved," the child "was graduated" and that the school was "overcrowded" or "condemned."

A third of the parents named behavior problems as reasons for transfer, seven percent named learning and emotional problems and truancy, and 15 percent referred to smaller or special classes.

On the whole, SMED parents appeared to be better informed than parents in the other groups about the reasons why their child was transferred.

Finally, there were the parents who did not know why the child was transferred, or who were informed peremptorily, after the fact.

"I received a card for a transfer. I was very angry about this, there was no explanation nor hearing."

"They had me to sign paper without telling me what kind of school P.S. _____ was."

"Well, only through my daughter, about transfer to the new school. But not why."

"I didn't know about my sons' transfers until they brought them home. I called the principal and asked him why they were being transferred. He told me that _____ was always late, so they transferred my other son, who is an honor student, because they are brothers."

Some of the parents (7 percent) initiated the transfer themselves for a variety of reasons:

"I had my boy transferred because he did not get along with the white children in his class. I had to take a week off from work to do this. I was referred to three different schools before son was accepted in P.S. ____."

"I had son transferred because there was constant trouble between my boy and the white children in the school. I know he isn't perfect, but he can't be wrong all the time."

The above reasons as perceived by parents are contrasted against the Board of Education procedures on transfers.

Junior Guidance: "The team should try to develop some pattern where there is a sustained relationship with parents."¹¹

Special Guidance: Special Guidance had no procedure available.

SMED: "The principal and guidance counselor should interview the applicant for admission, together with his parent."¹²

Career Guidance: "Principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, advisors, teachers, and parents should collaborate in the selection and placement of pupils."¹³

¹¹The Junior Guidance Classes Program, Board of Education of the City of New York, Division of Elementary Schools, May 1962 (1st revision) p. 2.

¹²"600" School - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Committee on the "600" Schools, a report to the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education of the City of New York, p. 18.

¹³Board of Education of the City of New York, Career Guidance Program, p. 2.

TABLE 12

PARENTS' REPORTS OF REASONS FOR PUPILS' TRANSFER

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School had no further grades	15	10	0	0	0	0	15	37	0	0
Student was graduated	15	10	0	0	0	0	11	27	4	17
Our family moved	12	8	3	20	0	0	2	5	7	29
School over-crowded, closed, condemned	8	5	6	40	1	2	0	0	1	4
To go to smaller classes, special instruction	22	15	5	33	11	16	1	2	4	17
Behavior problem	50	34	1	7	42	60	3	7	5	21
Parent disliked school, other pupils	10	7	0	0	5	7	3	7	0	0
Student has learning or emotional problems	7	5	0	0	5	7	2	5	0	0
Truancy	3	2	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	0
All other (school too far, transit strike)	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
School gave no reason/don't know	5	3	0	0	2	4	3	7	0	0
Total	148	100	15	100	68	100	41	99	24	100

Hearings or conferences were not held prior to the pupil's transfer in a large number of cases. These data are presented below in two ways to afford a more accurate and meaningful analysis. Since there is a large number of persons who did not answer this question, the figures on Table 13 are somewhat diluted. For comparison we also present Table 14 from which "No Answers" has been eliminated, to contrast more directly the percentage of those who had hearings or conferences with those who did not have them.

Considering that the screening procedure at the "600" Day School level states, "The principals and guidance counselor should interview the applicant for admission, together with his parent," it is surprising that 29 percent of all the SMED parents -- and 59 percent of the SMED parents responding to this question -- reported that they did not have a conference or hearing.

Table 13 shows that out of the 148 parents who reported transfers during 1966-67, 24 percent said they had a hearing or conference, 38 percent did not have a hearing or conference, and another 38 percent did not provide this information.

TABLE 13

PARENTS REPORT OF WHETHER A HEARING OR CONFERENCE
CONCERNING TRANSFER WAS HELD
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

Was Hearing or Conference Held:	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	36	24	5	33	14	21	11	27	6	26
No	56	38	6	40	20	20	21	51	9	37
No Answer	56	38	4	27	34	50	9	22	9	37
Total	148	100	15	100	68	100	41	100	24	100

Table 14 illustrates more directly the proportion of those who had hearings versus those who did not have them. In six out of ten cases no hearings or conferences were held prior to the child's transfer. It would appear that transferring pupils without a conference or hearing is most common in the Special Guidance program (66 percent) and least so in Junior Guidance (55 percent).

TABLE 14

PARENTS REPORT OF WHETHER A HEARING OR CONFERENCE
CONCERNING TRANSFER WAS HELD

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
YES - hearing or conference was held	36	39	5	45	14	41	11	34	6	40
NO hearing or conference	56	61	6	55	20	59	21	66	9	60
Total	92	100	11	100	34	100	32	100	15	100

The way hearings or conferences were handled is illustrated more subjectively by what some of the parents said:

"I received a letter saying he was slow in reading. They wanted to put him in a special class if I agreed to it. I said yes."

"I tried in every way to keep my son out of this school. They told me this was the best school for him."

"_____ was fighting in P.S. _____, so I was asked to sign for a transfer. I was shocked when I realized it was a "600" school. I asked to have him sent to regular school, but they refused, saying they would watch his behavior, then decide. I was afraid to make an issue, so I went along with them."

"I am very angry about my son's transfer and feel school is too far and that my son and I have been discriminated against. The Board of Education is sneaky and not truthful."

From a reading of Table 15 it is clear that the decision and requests for transfers originated with the schools -- parents requested the transfer in only 7 percent of the cases, while the schools did so in 66 percent.

TABLE 15

PARENTS' REPORT OF WHO REQUESTED TRANSFER
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parent	11	7	0	0	5	7	3	7	3	12
School Personnel	97	66	9	60	43	63	29	71	16	67
Unknown	40	27	6	40	20	32	9	22	5	21
Total	148	100	15	100	68	100	41	100	24	100

D. Amount of Contact between Parents and the Schools

The great majority (83 percent) of the parents have visited the school their child is attending at least once. Table 16 indicates 37 percent have visited three or more times. Among parents of children in the SMED and Special Guidance programs, over one-fifth have never been to the school their child is attending. On the other hand, almost all of the Junior Guidance parents (94 percent) have visited their child's school.

The percent of parents visiting these schools may be considered average or even good under some circumstances, but considering the special nature of these programs it is unfortunate that about one-fifth of parents have never been inside the school. Also, the time period was not defined in this question and the responses cover an unspecified length of time. A reading of Table 18 shows that 170 parents had any contact with these schools during the "current" year, and a reading of

Table 19 further shows that for 12 of these parents the contact was initiated by the school rather than going to the school. Thus only 158 out of the 270 parents have visited the schools during the "current year."

TABLE 16

PARENTS' REPORT ON VISITING THE SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, visited school	<u>223</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>89</u>
1 or 2 times	124	46	11	65	38	46	36	41	39	48
3 or more times	99	37	5	29	27	32	34	38	33	41
No, have not visited school	47	17	1	6	18	22	19	21	9	11
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Almost half of the parents who have ever visited the school went there because they were summoned by the school to discuss a problem:

"The school writes letters and I have to go to school constantly about his behavior problems."

"I had to go to sign him out."

"I had to go because they wrote for me to come -- he wasn't behaving."

"I went to school to see about one problem, and find about three others that the teachers had failed to notify me about."

"I speak Spanish only, don't understand English. Truant Officer is only one I have seen."

Over a third went uninvited, just to check on their offspring's progress or to help their child in some way:

"I go every chance I get, just to find out things -- because I'm interested."

"I constantly check to see how he is doing in his work."

"Went to P.T.A. meetings and had a few talks with the principal."

"I just go regularly to talk to her teachers and find out what's going on -- how she is doing."

The remainder of those who have ever visited (11 percent) went to school during routine visiting times, such as Open School Week, graduation and registration. These data are presented in tabular form on Table 17 below.

Asked what contact (e.g., via mail, telephone, personal visit to school, or visit by school personnel) they had had with the school during the current (1967) year, one-third of the parents reported they have had no contact of any kind. (See Table 18.)

TABLE 17

WHAT INITIATED PARENTS VISIT TO THE SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Self Initiated:</u>										
Interest in child's progress- school work, grades	77	34	4	25	24	37	18	26	31	42
Went to open school week, P.T.A. meeting, registration	24	11	5	31	4	6	11	16	4	5
<u>School Initiated:</u>										
Received telephone call or letter from teacher, guid- ance counselor, principal	89	40	7	44	25	39	31	44	26	35
Child suspended, truant, or trans- ferred	14	6	0	0	2	2	5	7	7	10
No answer	19	9	0	0	10	16	5	7	4	8
Total	223	100	16	100	65	100	70	100	72	100

TABLE 18

CONTACT PARENTS HAVE HAD WITH SCHOOL DURING "CURRENT" YEAR
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	170	63	14	82	62	75	54	61	40	49
No.	90	33	3	18	19	23	29	32	39	48
No Answer	10	4	0	0	2	2	6	7	2	3
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

TABLE 19

NATURE OF PARENTS' CONTACT WITH SCHOOL DURING CURRENT YEAR
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*
When asked to meet with teachers, counselors, principal, or social worker	66	39	6	43	23	37	23	43	14	34
Registration, open school week, and graduation	23	14	0	0	10	16	9	17	4	10
Attend PTA meetings and mother's groups	24	14	5	36	9	15	4	7	6	15
Telephone or letters from school to parent	19	11	1	7	11	18	4	7	3	8
Regularly visit school	17	10	1	7	5	8	11	20	0	0
Visited when I got a chance	21	12	1	7	4	6	3	6	13	33
Teacher, guidance counselor telephoned or visited parent	12	7	1	7	6	10	3	6	2	5
Total	170	100	14	100	62	100	54	100	40	100

*Columns add to more than 100 percent because some parents named more than one contact.

Among the 63 percent who had contact with the schools, the largest number (39 percent) again cited problem-oriented visits at the request of school personnel. Fourteen percent went to school for routine events such as registration or graduation, and the same percentage attended PTA meetings. Almost as many reported visiting "regularly," or "as often as I could," and about as many reported having been contacted via mail or telephone. About 7 percent were visited at home by a teacher, guidance counselor or other school official. (See Table 19.)

The following are some sample responses on the occasion for contact with the school the parents had:

"I attended open school week and checked on his attendance and lateness."

"Teacher wanted to know why my son wasn't coming to summer school. She convinced me to let him attend. She will be his teacher next year. I decided to let him go."

"I got letters to come to the PTA meeting."

"School psychologist called me to inform me about my son's progress."

"Yes, I went to open school week - and half of the teachers didn't show up."

"I was visited by my son's teacher."

"Got a phone call about fighting in school. And I got a letter for graduation exercise."

"Son was fighting and smoking in the bathroom, so they called me in."

"I can't walk, so I can't go to the school. I call the school psychologist and he calls me and gives me his (pupil's) progress."

Considering that a fairly high proportion of parents have had some contact with the schools it is somewhat disappointing that parents are not better informed and more involved with the schools their children are attending.

The majority of the parents interviewed (63 percent) do not attend PA or PTA meetings. Non-attendance figures are particularly high among parents of SMED (70 percent) and Special Guidance (66 percent) pupils. Only one out of ten parents reported attending three or more of such meetings. (See Table 20.)

TABLE 20

PARENTS REPORTING ATTENDANCE AT PA AND PTA
MEETINGS DURING "CURRENT" YEAR
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, attended meetings	<u>97</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>42</u>
1 or 2 times	62	22	4	24	19	23	20	23	19	24
3 or more times	35	12	5	29	5	6	10	11	15	18
No, has not attended meetings	172	63	8	47	58	70	59	66	47	58
No Answer	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Most of those parents who have not attended any PA or PTA functions (56 percent) stated that they are unable to do so because they have other young children to care for, the school is far or that they work evenings. Parents of Special and Career Guidance students also cited illness and English language problems. Parents of Career Guidance students (19 percent) and to a lesser extent those of Special Guidance (10 percent) and SMED (9 percent) students felt that these meetings were meaningless and accomplished nothing. About one out of ten parents reported never having been informed when meetings were held. Table 21 presents these figures. The following comments are representative of the non-attending parents' thinking on the subject of PTA meetings:

"I have seven children, and I have never received any invitation for the PTA meetings, therefore I don't know the date of the meeting."

"I don't understand English, and so I think an interpreter should be provided at meetings in order to help out parents in this situation. Parents shouldn't be disconnected from school because of such a simple reason."

"No PTA in this school."

"Don't like PTA. People don't pull together like they should."

"I work at night."

"School is too far."

"I lost interest two years ago."

"I can drink coffee at home."

"Meetings are at night, too dangerous."

"Never know when it's being held. Child never brings notices of meetings home."

"Don't have money to go to PTA meetings for paying dues. Children have to have money to go on trips. I have five children and on Welfare -- can't afford to pay all this money."

"I could go to her school when she was close to home, now she has to take the train and I cannot go to her school as often as I could when it was around the corner."

"My husband works in Jersey. I have two small children, hard to get away. Did visit school during Open School Week."

TABLE 21

PARENTS' REASONS FOR NOT ATTENDING PA AND PTA MEETINGS
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Inconvenient: School too far away	34	20	0	0	14	24	12	20	8	17
Other children to mind, mother works nights	63	37	5	63	21	36	20	34	17	36
Cannot speak English	13	8	0	0	1	2	7	12	5	11
Illness	14	8	1	13	3	5	5	8	5	11
Meetings mean- ingless/nothing accomplished	20	12	0	0	5	9	6	10	9	19
Never heard about meetings	17	10	0	0	8	14	6	10	3	6
No answer	11	6	2	25	6	10	3	5	0	0
Total	172	100	8	100	58	100	59	100	47	100

Eighty-four percent of the parents knew someone at the school with whom they could talk about their child's progress (see Table 22). The persons most often mentioned were teachers and guidance personnel, with a scattering of assistant principals.

TABLE 22

PARENTS' AWARENESS OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL AVAILABLE TO THEM
TO DISCUSS CHILD'S PROGRESS
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes - someone was available in school	226	84	15	88	73	88	73	82	65	81
No - knew of no one avail- able	37	14	2	12	9	11	12	14	14	17
No Answer	7	2	0	0	1	1	4	4	2	3
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Seventy percent of the parents who reported knowing someone available at the school spoke to that person within the past five months (see Table 23). Parents of SMED and Special Guidance students report speaking to this person recently slightly more often (72 percent and 76 percent respectively) than the other parents.

TABLE 23

LAST TIME PARENT SPOKE TO SOMEONE AT SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 - 5 months ago	158	70	9	61	53	72	55	76	41	64
6 months ago or longer	38	17	1	6	10	14	9	12	18	27
Do not remember/ no answer	30	13	5	33	10	14	9	12	6	9
Total	226	100	15	100	73	100	73	100	65	100

The parents appreciated any positive interest that school personnel took in them and their children. The great majority of those who have spoken to someone at the school felt that they were helped on that occasion (as shown in Table 24).

TABLE 24

PARENTS' REPORT OF HELP RECEIVED AT SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, was helped	176	78	12	80	54	74	59	81	51	78
No, was not helped	29	13	0	0	10	14	8	11	11	17
Not sure	3	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	2
No answer	18	8	3	20	7	10	6	8	2	3
Total	226	100	15	100	73	100	73	100	65	100

"Help" does not necessarily consist of providing some additional service for the parent or child -- most of the parents who felt they were helped did so when they had been given a needed insight into their child or some advice on how to help the child further. Some felt they were helped when they found a principal who listened to them. Apparently they were alert and responsive to any interest, attention and concern shown them.

From the parents' responses it would appear that where any effort was made to work with them, it was warmly welcomed and appreciated.

"Guidance counselor called me to the job to discuss how he (child) acts, I think it was helpful."

"Teacher had offered to help my son at home if he needs it. He will have this same teacher next year. They like each other very much."

"I'm happy with the school and like the principal very much. Enjoy talking with him socially and have never been turned away."

"I like the fact that the teacher keeps in touch with me at home, telling of absences, conduct and school work."

"Mrs. _____ (the teacher) calls often to discuss the children's subjects in school, she seems interested in the children's problems."

"After the counselor and I talked, the child seems more serious about things. Seems to have stopped fooling around and gotten serious about his work and study. The counselor is so nice that we agree on most things."

In comparing Tables 18 and 24, more parents answered that they were helped than actually had any kind of contact with the school, therefore indicating some confusion. However, this help has too often not been forthcoming in the experience of the parents. Many expressed a serious need for guidance and support, but almost without hope of getting these from the school.

"We need more guidance. Parents and children are confused about which school child should attend and what jobs they (pupils) should prepare for, after leaving Junior High School."

"Child won't go to school. I have tried to help him by taking him there myself but once I leave him with Mr. _____ he always comes back home without attending any classes. His truancy is being ignored by the school. When he has been absent too many times -- they say, 'it's out of our hands. It is up to the Court.' I'm at a loss as to what I should do. I have tried everything and don't feel any sincere help from the school."

"The boy likes to design lamps. He wants to go to Vocational School; the Guidance Counselor told me that his papers had been sent to _____ H.S."

"The Guidance Counselor wouldn't listen to me on behalf of sending my child to the school of his choice."

"The teacher doesn't accept _____'s work as his own. She always say someone has helped him, never encourage him. She should praise him sometime."

"He should be encouraged to study electronics, because my boy is very apt in repairing electrical appliances. But they not doing it...."

"Mr. _____ just sit and look whenever we go to the school."

E. Parents' Appraisal of Changes in Children's Home and School Behavior

In order to learn what effect the addition of the educational resources to the schools was having on the children, parents were asked if they had observed any improvement in the child's behavior and attitudes.

Over half of the parents (56 percent) reported that their child's attitude and behavior at home had improved this year -- about a third said there had been no improvement, and eight percent noted that their child's home behavior had gotten worse. (See Table 25.)

TABLE 25

PARENTS' APPRAISAL OF CHANGE IN PUPILS' BEHAVIOR AT HOME (Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Behavior at home:</u>										
Improvement	150	56	10	59	53	64	42	47	45	56
No improvement	96	36	6	35	25	30	37	42	28	35
Worse	22	8	1	6	4	5	10	11	7	8
No answer	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Table 25 also illustrates that parents of children in SMED schools reported improvement in the child's behavior at home more often than other parents -- parents of children in Special Guidance noticed least improvement.

Asked if in their opinion there had been any improvement in the child's behavior at school, 57 percent of the parents reported improvement, 31 percent said there had been no improvement, and 9 percent reported behavior at school had deteriorated.

Parents of SMED school children were the most apt to report improved school behavior (69 percent) while parents of Career Guidance students noted least improvement (48 percent). Parents with children in Special Guidance had the highest percentage of deteriorated school behavior to report (15 percent). (See Table 26.)

TABLE 26

PARENTS' APPRAISAL OF CHANGES IN PUPILS' BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Behavior at school:</u>										
Improvement	153	57	9	53	57	69	48	54	39	48
No improvement	85	31	4	23	19	23	28	31	34	42
Worse	25	9	1	6	4	5	13	15	7	9
Other	2	1	1	6	0	0	0	0	1	1
No answer	5	2	2	12	3	3	0	0	0	0
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

In response to a question about the child's school work, 64 percent of the parents said there had been improvement, 20 percent noted no improvement and 15 percent stated the child's school work had gotten worse. (See Table 27.)

Here again parents of children in SMED schools reported improvement somewhat more often, while parents with children in Career or Special Guidance reported higher percentages of "no improvement" or deterioration in school work.

TABLE 27

PARENTS' APPRAISAL OF CHANGE IN PUPILS' SCHOOLWORK
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Improvement in schoolwork	174	64	12	70	59	71	54	61	49	60
No improvement in schoolwork	53	20	5	30	12	15	19	21	17	21
Schoolwork worse	39	15	0	0	11	13	15	17	13	17
No answer	4	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

The parents who observed changes in their child's schoolwork -- for better or for worse -- offered the evidence or information on which they were basing this conclusion. Generally it consisted either of direct observation of the child, or of the test scores, grades and report cards the child brought home. Some typical comments were:

"Child is reading more on her own this year, she gets books from the Public Library, and make book reports to get extra credit."

"Excellent, she is on the principal's list, does all her regular work."

"Because his marks went up from 45 to 65 and from 80 to 90."

"Report card shows general improvement."

"His grades are better than they were last year, but they still aren't good."

"He reads better, seems happier."

"Well, it improved a little, but he's slow in reading. He's getting tutoring after school."

"He studies harder--he gets his homework now."

"Although _____ is in the 7th grade, he now reads on the 8th grade level."

"_____ wants to learn -- is more interested and more grown-up."

"He had a passing report card for the first time this year."

"Yes, his marks are going up -- he hopes with doing good work he'll be able to transfer to a regular school."

"His reading is better, but not by far good enough."

The greatest number (42 percent) of the parents based their judgment of the child's schoolwork on his or her improved marks and grades. Twenty-two percent said the child was reading better and/or more, 15 percent observed better study habits and self-application and 7 percent noted that the child was generally more positive toward school than he had been the previous year. (See Table 28.)

Parents of Career Guidance and of SMED school students in particular, based their conclusions of improvement in schoolwork on the students better grades, rather than on any observable changes in study behavior. Among parents of SMED school pupils, 49 percent cited "better grades;" among Career Guidance, 47 percent. This compares to 31 percent in the Special Guidance group and 33 percent in Junior Guidance. On the other hand, better reading and homework study patterns were observed by only 27 percent of the SMED parent group versus 46 percent among Special Guidance and 50 percent in Junior Guidance.

These findings leave still unanswered the question of whether the school work of SMED school pupils had actually improved, or the grading curve had been lowered to permit fewer failures. A considerable number of the parents expressed concern that while the grades were better or the child was promoted, he was still unable to read or write adequately. As one woman reported:

"The boy came home and said to me: 'I'll graduate; they'll pass me to get rid of me'." Another mother stated: "The children's actual school records and their report cards nearly always differ. I found this out since I have been working in P.S. ____."

More frequently heard comments were:

"I don't understand how my boy has been promoted into the 8th grade, and can't read or write his own name."

"He is in 8th grade, but doesn't know how to read well."

"Oh, they say it's improved, his work. But the boy can't read or write -- and they want to graduate him in June! I asked the school not to pass him because of this."

"Last year they put him (child) out of school in May because he was too much too handle. And then they promoted him! I want to know why."

TABLE 28

PARENTS' REASONS FOR REPORTING IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOL WORK
(Number and Percentage of Distribution)

	Total*		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Grades have improved	73	42	4	33	29	49	17	31	23	47
Reads, writes, better/more	38	22	5	42	10	17	12	22	11	22
Gets homework, studies harder, does homework, brings books home	26	15	1	8	6	10	13	24	6	12
Likes school better, enjoys going, goes, and before did not	13	7	0	0	4	7	6	11	3	6
Improved - unspecified	15	9	4	33	0	0	9	17	2	4
No answer	16	9	0	0	10	17	0	0	6	12
Total	174	100	12	100	59	100	54	100	49	100

*Columns add to more than 100 percent because some parents named more than one reason.

The most often voiced explanation for the change for the worse observed in the child's schoolwork was that no homework was assigned, no books given to take home. Many parents maintained that the child

would study and benefit, if he was given homework. This observation came most often from parents of Special Guidance students. (See Table 29.)

An increase in truancy, chronic hookey playing and absenteeism was reported by over a third of the parents noting a worsening in school work. A slightly smaller percentage reported a general deterioration in the child's interest and study habits. Lower grades, inappropriateness of subject content to child's age and interest level, and some children's rejection of SMED schools were also mentioned.

"How could there be any improvement -- he hasn't been at school enough."

"_____ dislikes this school very much, and it sure shows in his school work."

"It seems that this school has very little of a program -- with this _____ stays out most of the time."

"All '600' schools should be checked for the quality of materials used. Some of it is plain silly for a grown boy."

"Children have fewer books and no homework. Principal tells me they have a shortage of books."

"Last year he was in 6-2, he did fine. Presently in 7-15, a slower class."

"He's not attending school or classes, playing hookey most of the time."

"It improved for a while, but now he is disinterested -- because of the reputation of the school. He's said he'd like to run away -- the neighborhood children call him convict because he goes to this school. Maybe they should at least change the name of it?"

"My child hasn't been to school since last year. He just will not attend."

"He's only been going to school two or three times weekly and plays basketball with other children who are also staying out of school."

TABLE 29

PARENTS' REASONS FOR REPORTING DETERIORATION IN SCHOOLWORK*
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total**		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No homework assigned, does not bring any books home	17	43	3	27	10	66	4	30
More truancy, does not attend so is not learning	14	36	6	54	3	20	5	38
Does not study, work, do his homework, read/not interested	12	31	2	18	3	20	7	54
Grades are lower now, doing less well	6	15	2	18	2	13	2	15
Schoolwork/books too easy, dull, dumb for age level	5	12	3	27	1	6	1	7
Conduct much worse	5	12	1	9	2	13	2	15
Resents stigma of school/hates new school/boys in new school	4	10	4	36	0	0	0	0
Total	39	100	11	100	15	100	13	100

*Parents of children in the Junior Guidance program reported no deterioration in schoolwork.

**Columns add to more than 100 percent because some parents gave more than one reason for deterioration.

F. Parents' Attitude Toward School - Vocational Goal Assistance and Achievement

In response to the question, "In general, are you satisfied with the help your child is getting in school?" the majority of parents (65 percent) indicated a general satisfaction (see Table 30). However, more than half of all parents also felt that their child needed more help than he was receiving. (See Tables 33 and 34.) Satisfaction with school was highest among parents of Junior Guidance pupils (76 percent), and was lowest among parents of Career Guidance students (54 percent). Four out of ten parents with children in Career Guidance were not satisfied with the help their children were receiving -- this is almost twice as many dissatisfied parents as in the other groups.

TABLE 30

PARENTS' SATISFACTION WITH HELP CHILD IS GETTING IN SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Satisfied:</u>										
Yes	176	65	13	76	59	71	60	67	44	54
No	80	30	4	24	21	25	23	26	32	40
No answer	14	5	0	0	3	4	6	7	5	6
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Among those who replied that they were "satisfied" with the help their child was receiving from the school there were many who reported

their child was performing way below par academically and/or was a behavior problem. These parents tended to place the blame for any failure squarely and totally on the child:

"Teachers are doing all they can, but child head is so hard, he won't listen."

"It's up to her to do her best."

"Teachers are doing fine job. School is good, but if _____ thinks he's going to run over us he will just go back upstate."

"He is too old now, there is nothing that can help him. He is just lazy."

"Well, it's all wasted on him. Maybe they should just take him away."

"Whip him."

"Since I went to school there has been a drop in school quality. I knew more in school when I was my son's age than he does now. I feel children are too pampered and teachers too lenient."

"Played hookie last year, but not this year. He was threatened to be put in a home, so he stopped. Doesn't like the school."

"I bet the school's allright. Why can't they just behave themselves like children -- they just have it too easy nowadays."

Some of the more typical reasons for satisfaction with the school were:

"The teachers keep in touch with us, it's so much better when you get the idea of what's going on."

"Because there's better disciplinary action and more books allowed to bring home to study."

"I like this school because I get along better with the school official."

"School improved since Mr. _____, a Negro, became assistant principal."

"He is getting special attention now and the teachers have more time to spend with the students, because of the small classes."

"He's still smoking too much, but he loves his school now -- and he goes."

"He gets better grades and reads better, and he takes pride and more interest. He likes the teachers and listens to them and is impressed by them."

"Oh, I don't know -- but we just don't get all them complaints and letters to come in all the time."

"Maybe they got better teachers, but they seem to be able to handle him, not so much trouble."

Those who stated they were not satisfied with the schools presented a variety of reasons:

"He just doesn't behave since he met some of the boys at this school."

"Children that are slow in schoolwork shouldn't be in a '600' school for bad children. There is a difference."

"_____ is dissatisfied with the school due to many bad kids there and the many fights they have. I don't think this is the best environment for a good development."

"I don't like my child to be considered good just because he does little things for the teacher and just sit. I like for him to get something in his head. I don't like the school."

"I find classes are of low educational content for the boy's standing. Next year he's going to Senior H.S."

"School is racially unbalanced, mostly white, and my son doesn't like the school because the children tease him."

"Too many substitute teachers."

"I think I should be informed about my child's reading progress. The only answer is that there are others whose reading is worse than his."

"I don't think she's learning anything. She never gets any work at all to take home. I just wonder what will happen...."

"Classes are too large, tutoring classes are not organized, in general, there's a 'don't care' attitude."

"I dislike the school. If possible he will be sent to an integrated school."

The most discouraging comments come not from the angry, dissatisfied parents, but from the genuinely baffled and troubled ones:

"I don't know, but as it is now, it's wrong."

"He just needs help. He needs help very badly and I just wish I knew what to do. How can I be satisfied?"

"Well, ...he has no idea of the sounds of letters and words...."

Asked if they talked over vocational goals with their children, about half of the parents replied in the affirmative -- with parents of Career Guidance students leading at 68 percent. While only one-fourth of those with children in Career Guidance reported not discussing this matter with their child, almost half the parents of SMED school children have not discussed this subject.

TABLE 31

PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO DISCUSS FUTURE VOCATIONAL
GOALS WITH THEIR CHILDREN
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	155	57	6	35	43	52	51	57	55	68
No	101	37	8	47	38	46	34	38	21	26
No answer	14	5	3	18	2	12	4	5	5	6
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

Asked if they thought the school was helping their child achieve his future vocational goal, half the parents replied in the affirmative, 27 percent said the school did not help, and the remaining 23 percent were not sure.

TABLE 32

PARENTS' EVALUATION OF WHETHER SCHOOL IS HELPING
CHILD TO ACHIEVE HIS VOCATIONAL GOAL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, school is helping	135	50	4	24	38	46	58	65	35	43
No, school is not helping	73	27	2	11	25	30	24	27	22	27
Do not know, no answer	62	23	11	65	20	24	7	8	24	30
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

An interesting pattern becomes evident when comparing Tables 31 and 32. Among parents of children in Special Guidance, 57 percent reported that they discussed future vocational goals with their child, but 65 percent responded that the school is helping the pupil to achieve these goals. It would seem that at least a small fraction of these parents have a blind faith in the school's help, since they cannot very well know what the child's vocational objectives are.

On the other hand, among parents of Career Guidance students, 68 percent have talked over vocational possibilities with their children -- but only 43 percent consider that the school is helping the child in the desired vocational direction.

In all, parents of Career Guidance students were least satisfied with the general help the child was receiving in school, most often reported need of additional help, discussed means of earning a living with their child most often, and were least pleased with the vocational direction their children's education was taking.

Parents of children in the Junior Guidance program were, on the other hand, consistent in their satisfaction with their child's schooling.

G. Parents' Perceptions of Additional Help Needed for Children

As noted below on Table 33, over half of the parents (53 percent) said that their child needed some additional help from the school. Parents with children in Career Guidance -- who had the lowest percentage of satisfied parents -- had the highest percentage (58 percent) of those

who felt help was necessary. Parents of SMED school students were second, with 54 percent.

TABLE 33

PARENTS SPECIFYING THAT THEIR CHILD NEEDS
ADDITIONAL HELP FROM THE SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Child needs help	143	53	7	41	41	49	48	54	47	58
No help needed and no answer	127	47	10	59	42	51	41	46	34	42
Total	270	100	17	100	83	100	89	100	81	100

In comparing Tables 26 and 27, 30 and 33, there is a discrepancy in the parents appraisal of changes in pupils' behavior at school, change in school work and the satisfaction with help child is getting in school, and parents appraisal of their child's need for additional help from the school.

On a general basis parents were dissatisfied. They felt that their child had improved, but not sufficiently, or that his behavior is better but he cannot read. These kinds of responses indicate that parents were polite, but their specific dissatisfactions had not been fully revealed.

The parents who specified that their children needed additional help from the school mostly agreed in their requests for basic academic remediation. A need for help with reading, writing and/or math was voiced by over half the parents. (See Table 34.)

TABLE 34

KINDS OF HELP NEEDED FROM SCHOOL
(Number and Percentage Distribution)

	Total		Junior Guidance		SMED		Special Guidance		Career Guidance	
	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*
Help in academic subjects	73	51	2	28	12	29	28	58	31	66
Get homework/more homework/bring books home	29	20	0	0	11	27	11	23	7	15
More, better counseling, guidance, psychological services	27	19	1	14	11	27	8	16	7	15
Better, permanent teachers	10	7	0	0	3	7	3	6	4	8
More supervision, discipline	6	4	1	14	3	7	1	2	2	4
Smaller, special classes/individual attention	10	7	3	43	2	5	2	4	3	6
After school classes	11	7	2	28	2	5	5	10	2	4
More contact, cooperation with teachers	9	6	3	43	1	2	3	6	2	4
After school recreation, programs	7	5	0	0	4	10	0	0	3	6
More, better subjects at proper age level	7	5	1	14	4	10	1	2	1	2
More modern schools	5	3	0	0	0	0	3		1	2
All other (e.g. remove stigma of SMED school, send child to camp, summer school, let volunteers help in school)	10	7	0	0	5	12	3	6	2	4
Child needs help - not sure, don't know what or how	16	11	1	14	6	14	5	10	4	9
Total	220	100	14	100	64	100	73	100	69	100

*Column adds to more than 100 percent because some parents named more than one form of help needed.

Requests for academic remediation were expressed by parents of Career Guidance (66 percent) and Special Guidance (58 percent) students about twice as often as by the other two groups. Parents of children in SMED schools were more apt to specify a need for more counseling and psychiatric services and (27 percent) for homework assignments. Other needs were mentioned by smaller numbers of parents. About one out of ten parents stated that a need definitely existed, but were unable to formulate the problem or its solution beyond that. The following comments represent a cross-section of the kinds of help requested by the parents.

"More reports should be sent home for parents to know what's going on -- more contact with the parents. Teacher should see the parents, more efforts to inform the parents. They only notify the parents when he (child) gets out of hand."

"Son needs someone to talk to him about what goes on inside him. Need help from psychiatrist."

"Help with the subjects -- like reading and arithmetic."

"Give him the right kind of teachers who understand how to give him his work."

"Employing more teachers and no half day."

"Spend a full day in school, maybe the extra hour that he does not go should be used for more reading."

"Marks given in school on paper bring utter confusion to us. Paper show A and 100, and on final grades he receives failing marks. Marking system and school records are confusing. Wish they'd explain sometimes."

"We need more guidance. Parents and children are confused about which school child should attend and what jobs they should prepare for, after leaving Junior High School."

"Well she should be getting homework and more school books, because she doesn't have anything to study with."

"The other school had a mother's club and I was active in it. We had many activities like music, cooking and conferences for the mothers in the school."

"There should be someone in school who speaks Spanish, to explain to Spanish speaking families and guide the children."

"I'd say some really solid help in reading and math and basic things that they must know. He's a pretty bright boy, he could learn all right. I don't think anyone's really tried."

"They seem to send him out anytime he does something. Teacher should correct the child more. More reports should be sent home for parents to know what's going on."

"He needs a lot of help, anything to develop interest in school will help."

"More guidance."

"I think all schools should be modernized and this would greatly benefit the learning of pupils and give them more incentive to attend."

"Developing better programs and a better teacher-pupil relationship."

"I would like to see more Negroes and Puerto Rican teachers, guidance counselors, principals and vice principals."

"Give the teacher a stronger hand with the pupils."

"I'm in favor of more strict measure, and a better teaching system."

"Negro guidance counselors and teachers."

"I suggest they try to get permanent teachers."

There were parents who stated that their child should not be separated from a regular class in a regular school. They made such comments as:

"Children that are slow in school work shouldn't be in a '600' school for bad children. There is a difference."

"_____ and other children with problems should remain in regular classes and a psychologist or guidance counselor could meet with the children on regular basis or whenever necessary."

"Children might benefit better by getting special attention and remain in regular classes."

"If they took the teachers from the 600 schools and put them in regular schools, classes could be smaller; I think that would help."

- "I feel that placing slow children all in the same class doesn't help them. Some smart students should be mixed with them."

"Why is it that children who are slow have to be in a '600' school? This can't help his or her problems, but make more. When the teachers are not really interested in helping them."

"I'm not satisfied with the environment of the school. The school system is worsening. Would like to send son to another (private) school."

"I doubt that this class will help him that much. He would probably do as well in a regular class."

Some parents were of the opinion that their children would make better progress in a regular school than they were making, that the additional personnel and supportive services in the special schools should be used for consultation and to reduce class size in regular schools.

The Board of Education did not, in many instances, follow its own procedures in notifying and involving the parents of their children's

change in school status (as shown in Tables 11, 12, 13, and 14). Parents in Junior Guidance reported 33 percent, in Special Guidance 27 percent, in Career Guidance 26 percent, and only 21 percent of SMED parents reported that a hearing or conference was held.

H. Summary of Findings

The parents of children enrolled in special educational programs (i.e., Junior Guidance, SMED, Special Guidance, and Career Guidance) are by and large not informed about their children's school situation. More than a third of the parents are aware of the fact that their children are enrolled in "special" educational programs, and of the nature of these programs. The majority are at best only vaguely aware of this fact -- and to some of them it is a cause for displeasure and resentment, rather than for satisfaction.

Specifically, only about half the parents knew of any differences between their child's previous and current school or class situation. Over a third knew of positive changes -- with the rest reporting a change for the worse.

Parents of Junior Guidance pupils were most aware of changes in their children's school situation and most often said the change was for the better (77 percent); while parents of Special Guidance pupils seemed least informed about changes in their child's school situation and reported changes for the better least often (26 percent).

The positive changes observed by parents were that the child was making better progress, liked his school better now, and that the classes were smaller or special. The positive changes reported by parents of SMED pupils were largely of a subjective and generalized kind, i.e., that

their child "liked" his school better or was "progressing" better (43 and 29 percent respectively). Only a small fraction of these parents reported that the child was in a smaller or special class.

On the other hand, the great majority (77 percent) of the parents of Junior Guidance pupils referred to "special" or "smaller" classes in this context. None of the parents with children in Junior Guidance said their child's school situation had worsened. Among parents who did feel that their child's school situation was worse "this" year, the majority pointed to greater truancy and greater adjustment problems. This observation was made most often by parents of children in Career Guidance. Parents with children in Special Guidance also mentioned decline in discipline and some with children in SMED schools said the teachers were too impermanent.

The parents' lack of information and misconceptions about the true nature of these educational programs were revealed when many explained that their child was transferred because his former class or school was overcrowded, or condemned, or had no further grades, or because the family moved.

From the parents' perspective, only about one-third of the youngsters used any "special educational services" -- the majority clearly stated that their children did not use any such "special" services.

If the programs studied are indeed "enriched," "superior," or "additional" to what the children have gotten educationally in previous years, it would seem that this information has not yet filtered down to at least half of the parents.

One likely reason why parents were uninformed about their children's schooling is that in almost half the cases the student was placed in the program without a formal conference or hearing. Requests for

transfers were initiated by the child's parents in only a small fraction of the cases -- generally the decision to transfer the pupil issued from the school's personnel. Frequently parents were notified of any changes only by mail or by a note the child brought home. In some instances parents stated that they were not notified at all.

Parents are thus relatively uninformed -- this in spite of the considerable amount of contact they have with the school. The bulk of parents have visited the school their child is presently attending at least once. Over one-third have been there three or more times. The majority have had some contact with the school during the school year surveyed, either in person or via mail or telephone. The contact in most of the cases appears to be superficial, routine or limited to emergency situations.

The majority of parents do not attend PA or PTA meetings -- mainly because they cannot leave their other children unattended, because they work nights, or because the school is much too far away.

On the other hand, most of the parents know someone at school with whom they could talk about their child. Among these parents the great majority spoke to that person within the past five months. A positive sign is that most of these parents feel they had been helped by the person with whom they had contact. The responses show that when school personnel does offer intelligent understanding and suggestions, the parents are greatly responsive and appreciative.

The most encouraging finding is that over one-half of the parents felt that their child's behavior at home and at school had improved.

With reference to the children's school work, the majority cite improvement, but one out of seven feel the child's school work has deteriorated. The changes for the worse noted were that children were assigned no homework, were not learning, have become chronic truants, and/or resented being assigned to a school characterized by a social stigma (this particularly in the case of SMED schools).

The general impression gained from the study is that many parents are cognizant of positive actions taken on behalf of their children by specific individuals in the schools -- but that they feel the school system, or the administration of a given school, are not oriented toward recognizing and meeting their children's needs.

Although a majority of the parents express general satisfaction with the "help the school is providing," more than half name specific needs of their children which the schools are not presently meeting. Also, only half of the parents feel that the school is helping the child to achieve his future vocational goal. Also, some parents question the value of the special schools.

The kind of help needed by their children is, according to the parents, basic academic remediation such as language arts and mathematics, counseling and psychiatric services, assignment of homework and distribution of books, individualized attention from someone who cares, Negro and/or better teachers, more communication and cooperation between teachers (school) and parents, after school classes, etc. About one out of ten of these parents are aware that a need exists, but are unable to formulate its solution.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey revealed that: 1) the informational level regarding special educational programs among parents of children enrolled in these programs was very uneven and most often vague and incomplete, and 2) a sizable proportion of the children and consequently of the parents, still confronted serious unsolved educational problems and was seeking further help.

The following recommendations are addressed to the task of creating

1. more and better understanding of special educational programs among parents whose children are enrolled in these programs;
2. Greater involvement and participation by parents in their children's educational processes, to maximize their benefits, and
3. these objectives are to be reached through the means of:
better quantity and quality of contacts between the parents and the schools.

A detailed proposal for structuring parent-school relationships is to be found in Appendix B.

It is recommended that:

1. The guidance and psychological-psychiatric services be organized and/or augmented to permit these specialists to reach all the students in need of their services and to permit for more direct work with parents.

2. Contact between parents and teachers through meetings and conferences should be considerably increased. Several ways towards achieving this objective are suggested:

Invite all mothers and/or fathers or guardians of the child to one or two meetings at the school during the week prior to the beginning of the school year (early September). If possible, the first contact (i.e., invitation) should be personal, by telephone or in person. On that occasion the school staff member making contact can discover if parent can attend a meeting and if so, what would be the most convenient time. Several meetings can be scheduled for the first week at various times and a parent can choose the most convenient for him.

Provisions should be made for all the children of parents attending meetings (preferably at school) to enable parents to attend, such as child care and food.

In the course of these preliminary meetings the program in which the child is involved could be carefully explained to parents. Contact could be established between the parent and teacher. School personnel could obtain pertinent information on the child from the parent which may not be available on the school record. The parent's role in making the program successful would be carefully outlined.

In the course of the preliminary meetings patterns for future meetings should be established.

Many of the parents surveyed explained non-attendance at PTA or other school meetings by limiting physical circumstances: not being able to leave young children, working at time meetings are held, not being

able to travel to schools too far away. It is the objective of the early meetings to eliminate some of these obstacles to parents participation in such school activities.

Parents should indicate under what circumstances (alone or with children) and at what times they could attend. Meetings can then be scheduled at times convenient to the greatest number -- with a possibility of alternating time slots to accommodate all.

The content of the future meetings should be a formulation of mutually agreeable educational goals for the children. The educational goals of the schools have always been explicit; the goals of parents have been either taken for granted or ignored. Once it is established what it is the parents want educationally for their children a clear definition must be made of which means toward this objective can be achieved by parents and which by school. It may well be necessary to spell out with parents exactly what they must do to help their child achieve this goal.

Procedures should be set for mutual reporting between parents and teachers. This should occur as often as the child's case warrants it. During these meetings parent and teacher could check on how much of their respective goals in regard to the child they had achieved and what the next steps should be. This coordination of effort between teacher and parent may be costly in terms of some additional time, but it would be well balanced by educational gains by the child, parents and teacher.

In the case of transfers to a different school or program, care should be taken that the parent is fully informed and consulted. Both

sending and receiving schools should make every effort to involve the parents and to elucidate features and goals of the program suggested for the child.

In cases of truancy, action should be taken at once rather than ignoring it until it is sufficiently grave to be referred to the court (which leads to suspension and referrals to SMED schools). Supportive services of guidance and psychological personnel should be extended to parents unable to cope with their own or their children's problems until such time as referrals to a family service agency can be made.

The survey uncovered several instances of what appeared to be cases of acute social and psychic disorders in the child's home without having any professional or agency assistance. Since in many instances the school is the only social institution with which the family has any contact, it should take on the function of referral in acute, emergency cases.

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENTS

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION
105 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

May 4, 1967

Dear Parent:

This will introduce _____, a representative of the Center for Urban Education of New York City who is responsible for evaluations of some of the programs in the New York City public schools.

We are asking a selected number of parents how they feel about the schools their children go to. We are interested in what changes, if any, they would like to see made to improve the quality of education that their children receive.

Your name was selected at random among the parents in the school that your child or children attend. Any information you may give will be kept in complete confidence, and the fact that we talked with you will never be made known.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

Thelma M. Williams, Ed.D.
Chairman
Special Education Evaluations

TMW/mi

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION
105 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Mayo 4 de 1967

Estimada Madre (Padre):

Esta carta es para presentarle a la Sra. (Sr.) _____
quien representa al Centro de Educacion Urbana, entidad responsable de
evaluar algunos programas de las escuelas publicas de Nueva York.

Hemos escogido un numero de padres para preguntarles sus opiniones
con relacion a las escuelas de sus hijos. Interesamos saber los cambios
que Vds. desean, que se efectuen con el proposito de mejorar al educacion
de sus hijos.

Su nombre fue seleccionado para que Vd. sea entrevistado. La infor-
mation que Vd. nos de sera confidencial y nunca se revelara el hecho que
Vd. hablo con nosotros.

Gracias por su cooperacion,

Sinceramente,

Thelma M. Williams, Ed.D.
Evaluaciones Especiales Sobro Educacion

TMW:mo

CONFIDENTIAL

Translation of Parent Questionnaire

Centro de Educacion Urbana
105 Madison Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10016

Dra. Thelma M. Williams - Directora

Cuestionario para los Padres

Forma para ser usada al entrevistar a los padres de los ninos matriculados en los Programas de Orientacion Especial, Orientacion de Carreras Profesionales, y Orientacion en la Escuela Intermedia, implementados en las escuelas destinadas a ninos socialmente desajustados y emocionalmente perturbados.*

Instrucciones para el que entrevista:

Por favor, marque la palabra Si, o No, o llene el espacio en blanco segun sea el caso. Escriba sus comentarios al dorso de la ultima pagina.

Cuestionario para los padres

Informacion

1. Nombre del estudiante _____
 2. Direccion _____

#
Calle

Borough
Zip Code
 3. Escuela _____
 4. Nombre del padre o guardian (el entrevistado) _____

 5. Direccion _____

#
Calle
Apt.
 6. Parentesco de la persona entrevistada con el estudiante _____

- Nombre del que entrevista _____
- Nombre del padre, madre o guardian _____

*Para ser visto solamente por los entrevistadores

Parent Questionnaire

Preguntas Informales Para Establecer una Relacion

- a) ?Cuantos tiempo hace que Ud. esta en Nueva York? _____
- b) ?Ha vivido siempre _____ con Ud? Si () No ()
(Nombre del Estudiante)

(Si la respuesta de la pregunta "b" es No, haga las preguntas "c" y "d".)

- c) ?Cuantos tiempo ha estado el (ella) en Nueva York? _____
- d) ?A donde vivian _____ ante de venir Nueva York? _____
- e) ?A donde nacio? _____

Cuestionario para los Padres

Preguntas:

1. ?En que escuela estudio su hijo o hija? _____
(Nombre o Numero)
 2. a) ?En que grado esta su hijo(a)? _____
b) ?Que edad tiene su hijo(a)? _____
 3. ?Quien es su maestro o maestra oficial? _____
 4. ?En que escuela estaba su hijo(a) el ano pasado? _____
 5. ?En que grado estaba el o ella el ano pasado? _____
 6. ?Si hubo algun cambio? ?Como ocurrio dicho cambio? _____

- ?Hubo alguna vista, fue notificado el padre de esto y de las razones de cambio? _____
- ?Quien le informo sobre ello? _____
7. a) ?Hay algo distinto este ano sobre la clase, o escuela de su hijo(a), comparado esto con el ano pasado? Si () No () ?En que consiste la diferencia? _____

Nombre del que entrevista _____

Nombre deo padre, madre o guardian _____

Parent Questionnaire

7. b) ¿Ha recibido Ud. alguna información, no mencionada antes, sobre la escuela de su hijo(a) este año? Si ____ No ____
- ¿En que consiste esta información? _____
- ¿De quien la recibió? _____
8. En su opinion, ¿ha habido algun progreso o mejora en la actitud de su hijo(a) (de comportarse, de relacionarse) en el hogar en esta año?
- Si ____ No ____ ¿En que consiste este progreso? _____
9. En su opinion, ¿ha habido algun progreso o mejora en el comportamiento de su hijo(a) en la escuela este año? Si ____ No ____ ¿En que consiste este progreso? _____
10. En su opinion, ¿ha habido algun progreso en el trabajo escolar de su hijo(a) Si ____ No ____ ¿En que consiste este progreso? este año en comparacion con el año pasado? _____
11. ¿Que contacto ha establecido Ud. con la escuela este año? _____
12. ¿Asiste Ud. a las reuniones de Padres y Maestros de la escuela? de su hijo(a)?
- No ____ ¿Por que no? _____
- Si ____ ¿Con que frecuencia? _____
- Nombre del que entrevista _____
- Nombre del padre, madre or guardian _____
13. a) ¿Visita Ud. la escuela? Si ____? Con que Frecuencia?
- una, dos ____ tres o mas ____
- No ____? Por que no? _____
- b) ¿Quien incio la visita? _____
- ¿Vino usted porque fue llamado o recibió una carta?
- Si ____ No ____

Parent Questionnaire

14. ¿Hay alguien en la escuela con quien Ud. puede discutir el progreso escolar, conducta, o problemas de su hijo(a)? Si _____ No _____
- ¿Quien es esta persona? _____
- ¿Cuando fue la ultima vez que hablo con esta persona? _____
- ¿La ayudo esta persona? Si _____ ¿Como la ayudo? _____
- No _____ ¿Porque no? _____
15. ¿Utiliza su hijo(a) algun servicio escolar especial? Si _____ No _____
- ¿Cual o cuales? _____
16. ¿Discute su hijo(a) con Ud. sobre lo que quiere ser el (ella) en el manana? (meta, aspiraciones)? Si _____ No _____ ¿Piensa Ud. que la escuela esta ayudando a su hijo(a) para que mas tarde el pueda lograr sus aspiraciones? Si _____ No _____
- ¿En que forma la escuela ayuda a su hijo(a) en esto? _____
17. En general, esta Ud. satisfecho con la ayuda que su hijo(a) recibe de la escuela? Si _____ No _____ ¿Que otra ayuda piensa Ud. que el (ella) necesita? _____
- Nombre del que entrevista _____
- Nombre del padre, madre o guardian _____
18. ¿Como, segun Ud., esta ayuda puede ser provista (dada)?

- Nombre del entrevistador: _____
- Direccion _____
- #
- Calle
- Apt.
- Borough
- Zip Code
- Numero de telefono: _____
- Hogar
- Oficina
- Fecha de la entrevista _____
- Nombre del padre, madre o guardian _____

CONFIDENTIAL

CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION
105 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Committee on Field
Research and Evaluations

Dr. Thelma M. Williams
Evaluation Chairman
May 4, 1967

Parent Questionnaire

Form to be used in interviewing parents with children in Junior Guidance, Special Guidance, Career Guidance or schools for Socially Maladjusted and Emotionally Disturbed children.*

Instruction to Interviewer: Please check "yes" or "no" or fill in answers where indicated. Write any comments you wish to make on the back of last page.

Information Data:

1. Name of Student: _____
2. Address: _____
3. School: _____
4. Name of parent or guardian (the interviewee): _____
5. Address: _____

No.	Street	Apt.	Zip Code
Borough		Telephone No.	
6. Relationship of respondent to pupil: _____

Warm Up Items

- a) How long have you been in New York? _____
- b) Has _____ always lived with you? Yes _____ No _____
(Pupil's Name)
- (If answer to "b" is NO, ask QUESTIONS "c" and "d")
- c) How long has _____ been in New York? _____
(Pupil's Name)
- d) Where did _____ live before coming to New York? _____
(Pupil's Name)
- e) Where was _____ born? _____
(Pupil's Name)

*To be seen only by interviewer.

Parent Questionnaire

1. What school does _____ attend? _____
(Pupil's Name) (Name or Number)
2. (a) What grade is _____ in? _____
(Pupil's Name)
- (b) How old is _____?
(Pupil's Name)
3. Who is _____ (Homeroom) teacher? _____
(Pupil's Name)
4. What school was he in last year? _____
5. What grade was he in? _____
6. Was _____ transferred? Yes ()
(Pupil's Name) No ()
- (a) Why? _____
- (b) Was there a hearing? Yes () No ()
- (c) Were you given the reason for the transfer? Yes () No ()
- What was the reason? _____
- (d) Who requested the transfer? _____
7. (a) Is there anything different about _____ class or
(Pupil's Name)
school this year as compared with last year? Yes () No ()
- In what way is it different? _____
- (b) Did you get any information, not mentioned above, about his
school or class this year? Yes () No () What and from
whom? _____
8. In your opinion has there been any improvement in _____
(Pupil's Name)
attitude at home this year, as compared to last year?
Yes () No () In what ways? _____

Parent's Name _____

Interviewer's Name _____

Parent Questionnaire

9. In your opinion, has there been any improvement in _____
(Pupil's Name)
behavior at school this year, as compared to last year?
Yes () No () In what ways? _____
10. In your opinion, has there been any improvement in _____
(Pupil's Name)
school work this year, as compared to last year? Yes () No ()
In what ways? _____
11. Did you have contact with _____ school this year?
(Pupil's Name)
Yes () No () In what way? _____
12. Do you attend Parent Association, Parent Teacher Association meet-
ings? Yes () No () 1 or 2 times () 3 or more times ()
If not, why not? _____
13. (a) Do you visit the school? Yes () No ()
1 or 2 () 3 or more times ()
(b) What initiated the visit (who asked you to come)? _____

Did you go because you were called or received a letter?
Yes () No ()
14. Is there someone in _____ school with whom you can talk
(Pupil's Name)
about his/her progress (how he/she is getting along)?
Yes () No () Whom? _____
When did you last talk to this person? _____
Were you helped? Yes () How? _____
No () Why? _____

Parent's Name _____

Interviewer's Name _____

Parent Questionnaire

15. Does _____ use any special school services?
(Pupil's Name)
Yes () No () What kind? _____
16. Does _____ talk over with you what he wants to do to
(Pupil's Name)
make a living (i.e., goal)? Yes () No ()
Do you think the school is helping him/her so that he can obtain
his future goal? Yes () No ()
17. In general, are you satisfied with the help _____ is
(Pupil's Name)
getting in school? Yes () No ()
What additional help do you think he/she needs? _____

18. How do you think the additional help should be provided? _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Address: _____
No. Street Borough Zip Code

Phone No.: _____

Date: _____

Parent's Name: _____

APPENDIX B

NEW STRUCTURE FOR PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

NEW STRUCTURE FOR COMMUNITY PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

The survey on Opinions, Attitudes and Perceptions of Parents of Children in New York City Public Schools and Special Classes for the Socially Maladjusted and Emotionally Disturbed revealed that: 1) the informational level regarding special educational programs among parents of children enrolled in these programs was uneven, 2) the Board of Education procedures were not carried out consistently, and 3) the Board of Education procedures were inadequate. It also revealed that a sizable proportion of the children, and consequently of their parents, still confronted serious unsolved educational problems and were seeking further help.

This appendix deals with a structure for improving parent-school relationships. The reason for it is because it was found that parents were too often bypassed when decisions were made concerning their child's education. Also, parents had grave and vital questions concerning their child's education and placement in these programs (see pages 24, 30-31, 53, 55).

A prescription for controlling school disorder resulting from a pupil's lack of interest, identity and pride is not to police the schools but to secure pupil's assistance and participation through meaningful involvement and support. Pupils will respect their own property and take pride in preserving and maintaining what they have worked for and own (that which belongs to them).

The establishment of a new structure for parent-school relations requires honest personal involvement as well as cooperative interaction

between parents, community agencies, and the school. It is necessary that parents, children, teachers, as well as community people, understand, accept and become involved in the implementation of this new structure because it is their school program.

The structure established is to include all segments of the community -- each person has a personal stake in the success of the school program. Each person sees the validity of the new structure and will recommend changes when an aspect of the program has been fully implemented, tried, but does not work.

This structure is for finding out what the silent majority in a school feels and wants. It sets up a mutually acceptable course for action, plans for implementing the action and evaluating its outcomes. The plan is changeable as social issues dictate community change.

Parents have little knowledge of their taxpaying dollars -- not connected by money nor connected by need. It is therefore urgent that the schools restructure their parent-teacher programs to include parent participation and the dissemination of information.

Part of the confusion that exists among parents concerning the education of their children generally could be attributed to the lack of knowledge about Board of Education procedures (see page 68) as well as the inadequacy of these procedures. The definition of the parent's role in his child's education and the school's responsibilities need to be clarified. Also what community resources can contribute to the educational program should be defined with parents. In fact, as far as this author could ascertain no one has ever worked out with parents of children

in the public schools just what their responsibilities are nor defined the responsibilities of the Board of Education to the parents. It has been taken for granted that parents should know what to do to help promote their children's educational achievement.

The school structure has not assumed its responsibility in involving the parents and the resources of the community. An illustration of parents lack of knowledge about education was recently cited. Dr. Edward L. Bernays¹ directed a study, made by the Roper Research Associates of New York, of a San Francisco Bay area junior college district of 300,000 population. Dr. Bernays found that nine of every ten parents expect to send their children to college and 72 per cent of these want their children to attend a state-supported college in California. "Yet," he said, "only 7 per cent of the district's adults reported they knew a great deal -- and 72 per cent knew little or nothing -- about West Valley College."

Jackson's² studies in primary schools have similarly noted the lack of basic information about educational matters on the part of working-class parents, and the necessity for a closer home-school link. The aim is to improve parent-school relationships, specifically to arrive at:

1. More and better understanding of educational programs among parents.
2. Greater participation and involvement by parents in their child's educational programs.

¹Article: Education Study Finds a Paradox; Parents of Future Collegians Ignorant of Nearby School, The New York Times, 9/8/68, p. 62.

²Jackson, Brian, Streaming: An Education System in Miniature, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1964, p. 88.

3. More use of community resources.
4. Analysis of community resources, their use, and procedures for securing needed resources not available.

For the above reasons, the following structure is suggested as a means for improving present parent-school relationships.

A. Better communications through meetings and conferences to increase understandings aims to establish:

1. A procedure where parents' goals for their children, the rights and duties of their role, can be defined.
2. Procedures whereby methods and approaches can be co-operatively worked out between parents and school personnel for mutual benefit.

There is an urgent need for improved communications as a means of closing the participational, informational, and attitudinal gaps between pupils, their parents, and school personnel in order to assure the help parents have requested for their children from the school.

3. Precise information on the role of the community and the resources available to parents and school personnel for improving or complementing educational services for children.

B. These objectives can be achieved by improving the quantity and quality of contacts or interaction between the parents and the schools.

The following suggestions are offered as one approach to improved parent-school relations.

A Division for Parent-School Relations should be established in each school, and should include:

- a. Staff, such as parent educators, research evaluators, legal advisors, community workers and pupils.
- b. A budget from central financing to defray operating expenses for such projects as training community-school legal assistants, reading specialists, and agency coordinators.
- c. A reorganized Guidance, Health and Psychological Services Division to facilitate liaison and co-operation with the Division for Parent-School Relations. This should provide services to all pupils as needed and to permit for more direct work with parents.
- d. The method for involving parents will begin with meetings at the school.

1. Warm Up Meetings

Invite all mothers, fathers and/or guardians of the children to meetings (the number of meetings depends on the situation at hand) at the school during the week immediately preceding the beginning of the school year. First contact should be

made before school ends in June if possible. The invitation should be personal. The staff member making contact can find out if a parent can ever attend a meeting and if so, what time would be most convenient for him. The school year should begin officially one week before children are admitted to classes. During this week several meetings should be scheduled at various times for the first week. Parents can choose the time most convenient for them.

- a. Provision should be made for all the children of parents attending meetings, preferably at the school.

In the course of these preliminary meetings, the program in which his child is involved could be carefully explained to each parent. Contact could be established between the parent and teacher. Craft, Raynor and Cohen³ stated:

"For parents not to be asked to come to such meetings is to suggest that they are not regarded as partners in shaping the destinies of their own offsprings. It is ideal to claim that parents are not interested in what the schools are attempting to do if the latter are not themselves doing everything in their power to foster a responsible and collaborative relationship. The relationship must be structured so that all concerned at least have the opportunity to be present and to make their contribution. Anything less may be regarded as a failure on the part of those responsible to meet the minimum needs and rights of the pupils."

³Craft, Maurice, John Raynor and Louis Cohen. Linking Home and School. Longmans, Green and Company Ltd., London, 1967, p. 71.

b. School personnel could obtain such information as pertinent data on the child from the parent which may not be available elsewhere. Both the parent's role and the teacher's role in making the program successful would be cooperatively discussed, outlined and developed.

c. Patterns for future meetings would be established during the preliminary meetings. Many of the parents surveyed explained non-attendance at PTA or other school meetings by limiting physical circumstances; not being able to leave young children, working at time when meetings are held, or not being able to travel to schools too far away.

C. The objective of the early meetings with parents, school personnel and community leaders is to establish without doubt that:

1. Schools belong to parents and their children and they would be warmly welcomed when they come.
2. Parents pay teachers' salaries, and without pupils and parents, there would be no need for schools or teachers.

Although the opportunity to receive education of the highest quality that one's mind can afford or one's ambition can demand is every child's birthright and is not to be equated with money.

3. Teachers are responsible for pupils' academic achievement

and need help from parents. Munat⁴ stated: "It is the teacher's job to assure the success of the academic performance so that the self-concept may benefit."

4. Every known approach should be used to eliminate the obstacles to parents' participation in school activities.
5. Parents, teachers and pupils must be organized into a team for cooperative interaction.
6. Community resources such as libraries, day care centers, hospitals, health centers, museums, banks, social service agencies and industrial firms are to be operated in accordance with the needs of the people and the school.

D. School meetings and conferences scheduled at parents' convenience; parents should be requested to indicate under what circumstances, alone or with children, day, night or weekend, and at what hours they could attend conferences and meetings. Meetings should then be scheduled at times convenient to the greatest number -- with alternating time slots as necessary to accommodate all. In addition:

1. School facilities should be open evenings, weekends, and holidays for the use of people in the community.
2. A room for parents should be so designated in each school, equipped with such items as sewing machines, washing machines, stove, freezer, for use of parents who did

⁴Munat, Charles E., "Four, Poor, Nonwhite and Out-of-Sight," Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, October 1968, p. 11.

shopping enroute to school as well as reading materials, workshop for repairing school equipment.

3. Provisions for child care should be provided for those who bring their children.
4. Older pupils in school should be trained to be "Parent Helpers" and take over homes for parents who wish to leave their children.
5. Parent Helpers should be trained by parents and teachers.
6. Parent Helpers should be paid by Division for Parent-School Relations.

2. Meeting Agenda Mutually Established

The content of the future meetings should be a formulation of mutually agreeable educational goals for the children and means for achieving these goals. The educational goals of the schools have always been explicit; the goals of parents have been either taken for granted or ignored. Once it is established what it is the parents want educationally for their children, a clear definition must be made of which means toward this objective can be achieved through parents' efforts, i.e., informational education outside the school. It may well be necessary to spell out with parents exactly what they and their child must do to help the child achieve this goal.

Craft⁵ stated:

"The parent also needs to appreciate the vital role of local authority and central government in education.

⁵Craft, Maurice, John Raynor and Louis Cohen, Linking Home and School, Longmans, Green and Company Ltd., London, 1967, p. 21.

Many of the parents' grievances can only be sorted out in Town Hall. Yet historically, the Town Hall has played a vital part in linking the affairs of home and school as, for example, in the provision of school meals, free milk, school medical and dental services. The education service is closely coordinated with other local government child welfare activities, such as child care and libraries, and juvenile courts require an Education Committee representative before they can function. Yet it is clear that administration of welfare services for the young is diffuse, and in too many hands. It is difficult, even for the persistent parent, to discover who is responsible for the various services. A move towards administrative consolidation might well be a positive encouragement to closer home-school and home-education-service linkage."

3. Parent-Teacher Handbook

Procedures should be established for mutual interaction including a plan for reporting between parent and teacher about the pupil. There should be specific instructions outlining parent and school obligations such as a procedure for doing homework, including a plan for coordinating the library hours, the librarian's services, and the purchase of reference materials for pupils, with pupil's study hours, days and needs. These interaction sessions should occur as often as the case warrants them. During these meetings parent and teacher would evaluate how much progress toward the achievement of the child's goal was made, and what the next steps should be. This coordination of effort between school and home may appear to be costly in terms of time, but it would be well balanced by educational gains. Not only would hardships be removed for the individual child, but it would improve such fundamental relationships in society as that between the socializing agency of the family and the feeding agency to the school. It is this relationship that contributes

to the context within which occupational roles are assumed, images are conceived and social character nurtured and established.

Craft⁶ wrote that:

"The fundamental questions that need to be asked about home-school relationships are neither sociological, or psychological, or biological; they are political and moral, in the sense that they are concerned with the means by which the individual is inducted into the wider society, the extent to which the family is entitled to sequester certain social advantages that are not universally available -- either because they are scarce resources or because they are not recognized as advantages at all -- with the respective rights and obligations of the individual and the family, on the one side, and the school and the society on the other."

4. Task Force

A task force to involve hard to reach parents should be established to contact parents who were not accessible through previously mentioned approaches.

Some socio-physiological barriers may need to be overcome if successful contact between school personnel and the parents is to be made and maintained, and the school -- as an institution -- will have to extend itself to achieve this end.

Some of these parents have experienced repeated failure and frustration in dealing with schools or other social institutions; some may be generally

⁶Craft, Maurice, John Raynor, and Louis Cohen, Linking Home and School, Longmans, Green and Company Ltd., London, 1967, p. 228.

alienated; some may feel insecure when dealing with teachers or other representatives of established authority. Others may be timid, self-conscious, embarrassed -- or hostile, defensive, sullen.

All of these parents need to be contacted and persuaded that their help and cooperation are essential to the educational success of their children and that their participation in the working of the school is desired and needed, regardless of how well or poorly they feel dressed, or how well or poorly they believe that they express themselves.

5. Team System

In order to facilitate the process of free communication between teachers and parents, it is suggested that a team system be adapted.

Teams should be organized:

- a. One teacher from each group to work with parents on a team.

Each team should also have a "Community Parent Assistant" (para-professional) assigned to it -- and one or more "Parent Helpers" (this student aide can be a student who dropped out of school) -- to help in contacting the "hard-to-reach" parents.

- b. The team members should be:

1. Paid a regular salary. (The parent helper and the community parent assistant should be paid by the hour or by the week.)
2. Placed under the leadership of the Division of Parent-School Relations.

3. Trained in techniques for making home visits to reach parents who have not been reached otherwise.
4. Trained in setting up meeting places for parents in places such as: Health stations and hospital clinics, local churches, Jehovah Witness Meeting Houses, Salvation Army shelters and thrift shops, barbershops, beauty parlors and laundromats.

Such methods will be used by the team as:

- a. A Buddy System.
- b. Provide transportation, or pickup parents on the corner, or from their home.
- c. Put notices on the local radio, in employment agencies, on street light posts, in poolrooms, liquor stores, banks, subways and buses.
- d. Request that bulletin boards for announcements are set up in parks, playgrounds, vacant lots.
- e. Help pupils to set up a school communicating system for keeping parents informed. Children know if their parents can read or write. They know how to communicate with parents who cannot read or write. If children write the class or school newspaper, it will be their personal contribution and they will interpret their message to parents.
- f. Work with doctors and clinics, the local librarians, the ministers, the bankers or places for cashing checks, settlement house and other community institutions.

- g. Interpret community agency procedures.
- h. Schedule appointments and provide exact names of persons to be seen, transportation routes, and length of time needed for traveling.

The suggestions in this Appendix B are part of a program which aims to establish a Parent's Handbook to be used for parent-school relationships.

APPENDIX C

1. STAFF LIST
2. CONSULTANTS
3. PARENT INTERVIEWERS

1. STAFF LIST

Thelma M. Williams, Ed.D., Chairman and Director
Senior Staff Associate
Community Development Division
Center for Urban Education

Mr. Jesse Bennett
Community Development Division
Center for Urban Education

Mr. Vincent Murdaugh, Coder

2. CONSULTANTS

Dr. B. Marian Brooks, Chairman
Department of Elementary Education
City College
City University of New York

Dr. Richard Trent, Associate Professor
Department of Education
Brooklyn College
City University of New York

3. PARENT INTERVIEWERS

Bronx

Mr. Carlos Dominicci
Mr. Gilberto Miele
Mrs. Wilhelmenia W. Myers
Mrs. Ramona Salgado

Manhattan

Mrs. Mary D. Castro
Mrs. Rebecca Flood
Mr. Laurens Ginsberg
Mr. Moses A. Hill
Mrs. Josephine Nelson
Mr. Federico Perez
Miss Patricia Smith
Miss Rachel L. Weston

PARENT INTERVIEWERS (continued)

Brooklyn

Mrs. Dorothy Barrett
Miss Emma M. Cloyd
Mrs. Lolita Cooper
Mrs. Mary Fauntleroy
Mrs. Clara Davis Kearse
Miss Patricia Kinard
Rev. James McClendon
Mrs. Marion McLaurin
Miss Evelyn Murdock
Mrs. Chiquita G. Smith
Mrs. Jean Sutherland
Miss Naomi L. Woodson

Queens

Miss Quindella B. Jordan
Mrs. Maria Ivory Edwards
Mrs. Thelma Murdaugh James